

A Call To Thanks I Chronicles 16:7-36

This was a little different Thanksgiving for us. A week ago we enjoyed Thanksgiving with my Dad and some of the family. Thursday we were supposed to go to Robyn's sister's for Thanksgiving but got a call late Wednesday that she has COVID. So we spent a relatively quiet day, not at all what we had planned.

How about you? Has there ever been a time when you wanted to do something or looked forward to something and it didn't go as planned or didn't happen at all? Maybe you checked with friends or family and got the green light, but then something happened that altered your expectations.

That's the situation David found himself in. In **I Chronicles 13** David met with his advisors and religious leaders about the possibility of bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Since its construction in the wilderness under the direction of Moses, it had resided in several places. When they entered the Promised Land, it was set up in Gilgal. Then it was relocated to Shiloh and remained there during the time of the Judges. Eli allowed it to be taken into battle where it was captured by the Philistines who put it in their temple. God sent some plagues that made them return the Ark to Israel who then set it up in Kiriath-jearim where it remained for a number of years. Then it was moved to Nob. When Saul heard that the priests helped David escape, he killed them believing they had conspired against him. Then it was moved to Gibeon about six miles from Jerusalem.

After David captured Jerusalem, he desired to have the Ark brought there. Read through many of the Psalms and there is no doubt of David's love and devotion to the Lord. Through all the trials and hardships he faced we often read words like **"We wait in hope for the Lord; He is our help and our shield. In Him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in His holy name."** (Psalm 33:20-21)

"I will extol the Lord at all times; His praise will always be on my lips." (Psalm 34:1)

"Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me. I will sacrifice a freewill offering to You; I will praise Your name, O Lord, for it is good." (Psalm 54:4, 6)

With such adoration for God, it's no wonder David wanted the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem. We can only imagine the kind of plans that must have gone into the celebration that would accompany this historic day. We read in **chapter 13** that during the days of Saul they had neglected inquiring of the Lord. David wanted to reinstate that practice, to ask the Lord for direction. He wanted it to be clear that he would seek God and the Ark was a visible reminder to all Israel that God was in their midst and that they should look to Him. No wonder David was considered a man after God's own heart.

He asked his leaders about moving it, but not how to move it. Or maybe he told them this is what we're going to do and because he was king, maybe no one wanted to raise a concern about his plans since it didn't follow the prescribed method given to Moses. They loaded the ark on a cart and began the journey to the capital city. Along the way, the oxen stumbled, and the cart teetered so that the Ark looked like it might topple over. Uzzah, who was walking along side the cart, reached out to steady the Ark and was instantly killed by the Lord. David had failed to obey God in how the Ark was to be handled resulting in severe judgment on Uzzah. What was supposed to be a joyful occasion of celebration turned into a time of great sadness. He wondered why God would do such a thing when all he wanted to do was honor God. The Ark remained at the house of Obed-Edom for three months during which time God richly blessed that home. In the meantime, David learned a valuable lesson about the Ark. It was only to be moved by carrying it.

That brings us to our passage in **I Chronicles 16**. This time the Ark was moved properly. On the day of its arrival, David committed this song to Asaph whom David had appointed as the sacred choir director. This song is a compilation of segments of **Psalm 105, 96, and 106**.

When David was finally able to bring the Ark to rest

in Jerusalem, he was overjoyed, worshipping, and praising the Lord. He had much to be thankful for in all that God had done for Israel and for him. Let's notice what David included in this song of thanks, which are reminders to us of what we should include when we give thanks to God.

First, give thanks for God's character.

I. GIVE THANKS FOR GOD'S CHARACTER – vv. 7-13

Throughout Scripture we get a detailed picture of God's character, not that it is a complete list or that we can understand everything there is about God. After all, He is infinite in His being and nature, and we are finite and will never comprehend all that there is to know about God. Yet, as we read the Bible, we come to understand a great deal about His character and see it displayed throughout the Bible. We learn that He is a loving Father who wants the very best for His children (**Romans 8:28**).

We learn that He is entirely good in what He does.
Nahum 1:7 “The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.”

Psalms 25:8 “Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He instructs sinners in His ways.”

I Peter 1:3 “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.”

His goodness naturally leads to our ability to trust Him in all things as we sometimes sing:

All Your ways are good,
All Your ways are sure;
I will trust in You alone.
Higher than my sight,
High above my life;
I will trust in You alone.

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We also learn from Scripture that He is holy.

I Samuel 2:2 “There is no one holy like the LORD; there is no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God.”

Revelation 4:8 “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

Scripture also teaches us of His righteousness, justice, grace, mercy, faithfulness, and forgiveness. He is true and truthful, patient and long-suffering, and full of compassion. He is unchanging, all-knowing, all-powerful and everywhere at all times.

The more we learn from Scripture, the more we discover about His character and from what David entrusts to Asaph we discover three aspects of His character worth noting.

A. Give Thanks for God's Person – vv. 7-8a, 10a

When the Bible refers to a name, it is referring to the character of that person. In this case it is the name of God on which we are to call and give glory to, a name that is holy. That holy name refers to His holy character.

When God changed someone's name, it's because He wanted to emphasize that there had been a change in that person's character. For example, God changed Jacob's name to Israel. Jacob meant one who deceives. Israel meant he who strives with God. It indicated a turning point in Jacob's life where he once trusted only in himself, now he was submitting to God's will.

God's name speaks to His character, His reputation, His majesty, His excellence, His glory and splendor. His character is how He is distinctly known. So when we hear the name God, we automatically think of those traits of His character that we just mentioned.

It is in His name and character that we are to glory. Glory is not external beauty based on material looks of form or feature. For example, Peter says that wives shouldn't have a beauty that is only on the outside, but that they should have **“an unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.” (I Peter 3:3)** God's glory originates from His character and David says that is something we are to give Him thanks for.

In this opening statement, David is stating that God

alone is the One who is worthy of praise, and we are to give praise first of all for His person. In our thanks, let's begin by acknowledging something about His unchanging character.

Be careful when giving thanks that it's not just about what God can do for us or what we're going to do for Him. Give thanks for His character.

The second thing David indicates we should give thanks for is God's power.

B. Give Thanks for God's Power – vv. 8b-9, 12

This is a public affirmation of what He has done and can do. Too often we want to just keep it to ourselves or our little group within these walls. But David says we are to let the nations know about God's power. We are to make His actions known as a testimony about the amazing things He's done.

When the spies went into Jericho and were hidden by Rahab, she indicated that they were well aware of what God had done in delivering them from Egyptian bondage. They knew about the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, how the Egyptian army had all drowned, events that happened 40 years earlier and there was still fear among the people thinking about the power of God.

There may be no fear of God in our nation today because we have remained silent about the power of God in what He has done for us. Think about how God has worked in our church over the past 10-15 years.

Our old piano needed to be tuned regularly. Someone provided the funds to purchase this one.

We have installed new lighting, new chairs to make it more comfortable for me to preach longer, new flooring, new windows, new siding, a new covered entrance and a new sign. They are a tribute to God's amazing power and provision.

COVID seems like a bad dream. Yet through it, God continued to meet the tangible needs of our church. I have talked with some pastors and heard reports which said that many churches had to cut their budget, their missionary support and programs. We

continued to see God's wonders and miracles as we met budget and even increased some support.

We are a small congregation and yet to provide over 400 boxes for Operation Christmas Child, or to give toward the Pregnancy Help Clinic and LACASA are a witness to the world of God's power.

I mention these things not because it's something to brag about, but to show what God's power has done through His people here. It's something to be excited about and thank God for. They are a testimony to the people around us of God's power.

Matthew 5:16 "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

But it isn't just the tangible way in which God's power has provided for various projects. There is a power that is at work in you where true spiritual transformation is taking place. I see God at work in you that is evident in the growth of your spiritual character that is a witness of His power. You are letting His divine power develop His divine nature in you (**I Peter 3:3-4**). Linda shared recently at Prayer meeting how it was the lives of Christians in how they were living that brought her to Christ because she wanted what they had.

A man born blind was questioned by the Pharisees about how he had received his sight. He told them some man touched him so that he could see. They wanted to know how a sinner could do that. The now seeing once blind man said, whether he was a sinner or not, he didn't know, but what he did know was that once he was blind but now, he could see.

The power of God is at work in you so that you can see spiritual truth that is changing you from the inside out. Let the others see that change.

And lest we should forget, let's remember that it is God's power that holds the universe together, that sustains us every second with breath and heartbeat.

Colossians 1:17 "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

Hebrews 1:3 "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being,

sustaining all things by His powerful word.”

GotQuestions puts it this way: **“To sustain something means to give it strength, protection, encouragement, and comfort. God’s sustainment is a holding together with a power that surpasses that of any human.”** That’s God at work in His power.

We are to give thanks for God’s power. It’s power to create, power to sustain, power to deliver, power to enable, power to guide, power to guard, power beyond comprehension.

**David says give thanks for God’s person.
David says give thanks for God’s power.
David says give thanks for God’s presence.**

C. Give Thanks for God’s Presence – vv. 8b, 10b, 11, 13

In these verses we see the compelling truth of God’s presence. In fact, throughout Scripture we see that reality.

Psalm 23:4 “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me, Your rod and Your staff they comfort me.”

Psalm 34:7, 15, 18 “The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and He delivers them...The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears attentive to their cry...The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Psalm 46:1 “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.”

Isaiah 41:10 “Fear not for I am with you.”

Hebrews 13:5 “I will never leave you or forsake you.”

Matthew 28:20 “And lo, I am with you always.”

David says that God’s presence is known by those who seek Him. (v. 10b)

David says that God’s presence will be known by future generations. (v. 13)

From what we know about God, never think for a moment that God isn’t with you, even if you may not sense His presence. He is always with those who are His children through the promised indwelling Holy Spirit. God will not abandon what belongs to Him.

While He is always with us, we are still told to seek Him. When it speaks in **verse 11** of seeking God’s face, it means to seek His presence, to have access to God. We are told to continually seek His presence which, according to **I Chronicles 22:19**, is something that we do through setting our heart and mind on Him. He is to be the attention of our mind and the affection of our heart. And we have the promise of **I Chronicles 28:9** that those who seek Him will find Him and according to **Hebrews 11:6** those who seek Him will be rewarded.

God is always present with His children through the promises He has made. Because of His abiding presence, we are to give Him thanks.

His person, His power, and His presence are part of His character that deserves our thanks.

Second, David tells us that we are to give thanks for God’s covenant.

II. GIVE THANKS FOR GOD’S COVENANT – vv. 14-22

Some have the misconception that a covenant and contract are one in the same. While there are some similarities, there are also distinct differences. A contract is made between two parties who are equal in status. We both give something, and we both get something. A contract is contingent on one party agreeing to do one thing while the other party agrees to do something else in a mutual agreement that benefits both. Each party vows to equal privileges and responsibilities in fulfilling their end of the agreement. If one party fails to hold up their end of the contract, the agreement is broken. In that sense, it is not binding.

A covenant is different. God did not make a contract but a covenant, and the covenant is based on His perfect nature and therefore is binding. People are

the recipients of His covenant and are as such, not expected to offer anything to the covenant He has made except to accept it as offered and to keep what is demanded leaving God to keep His word to what He has promised.

David says that we are to give thanks for God's covenant promise.

A. Give Thanks for God's Covenant Promise – vv. 14-15

There are five covenants mentioned in the Bible.

1. The Adamic Covenant – Genesis 3

Following the sin of Adam and Eve, God issued a number of curses on mankind.

There would be hostility between Satan and Eve and her descendants.

Childbirth would be painful for women.

There would be marital strife.

The soil would be cursed with thorns and thistles making it difficult to produce crops.

Survival would be a struggle.

Physical and spiritual death would be the inescapable fate of all living things.

But despite these curses, God bound Himself with a covenant, a promise that He would send someone to pay the debt for sin so that mankind would not have to live separated from God forever.

2. The Noahic Covenant – Genesis 9

In this covenant, God ensured the generations to follow that He would never again destroy the world with a flood.

3. The Abrahamic Covenant – Genesis 15

This chapter describes an unusual ceremony in which Abraham was told by God to bring certain animals and birds, cut them in half and lay the pieces side by side leaving a path through which to walk. The birds were not divided but laid opposite each other. Normally, when two people made a covenant they would both walk between the sacrificed animals indicating mutual responsibility, but in this case, God caused Abraham to fall asleep and then He alone moved between the animals. This was an indication that the covenant God was making with Abraham was not contingent on

anything Abraham did, but solely on the grace of God binding Himself to the promise He was making with Abraham. **Genesis 12:2-3** reveals the parts of the covenant and then it was passed on to Isaac and then to Jacob.

4. The Davidic Covenant – II Samuel 7

This is an unconditional promise God made with David promising three things. It reaffirmed the promise that the land would be theirs. It promised that his son would succeed him on the throne. It promised that the Messiah would come through his lineage and that His throne would last forever.

The Adamic covenant applies to us because we all need a redeemer because all of us have a sin nature passed on from Adam, so the promise to Adam is a promise to us as well.

The Noahic covenant also directly applies to us in that we don't ever have to fear a global flood. Yes, there are local floods that do considerable damage, but God will never destroy the earth again by flood.

The Abrahamic and Davidic covenants do not apply to us at least directly. We are not recipients of the land, and the Messiah did not come through our lineage. Yet there is a sense in which they have an indirect application. From the Abrahamic covenant there is the promise that those who bless his descendants would themselves be blessed. And from the Davidic covenant we can all benefit from the Messiah who would die for the sins of the world and become part of His eternal kingdom, which brings us to the fifth covenant that does have direct application to us.

5. The New Covenant – Luke 22

This covenant is the promise of God's forgiveness of sin through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. It's what Jesus referred to when He took the cup representing the new covenant that would be made through His blood. **Verse 20** says that the basis of this covenant would come through His death on the cross where His blood would be shed. The old covenant was based on keeping the Law. The new covenant is based on grace through the shed blood of Christ and received through faith as a

gift by no merit of our own. Both **Hebrews 7:22** and **Hebrews 8:6** tells us that the new covenant is superior with better promises than the old covenant under the Law. He keeps His word.

Joshua 23:14 “You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.”

Psalms 89:34 “I will not violate my covenant or alter what my lips have uttered.”

Psalms 119:160 “All Your words are true.”

II Corinthians 1:20 “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ. And so through Him the ‘Amen’ is spoken by us to the glory of God.”

Hebrews 6:18 “It is impossible for God to lie...”

So when it comes to the covenants God has made, we can believe Scripture when it says that God never lies (**Nu. 23:19**), meaning He will never go back on His covenant. He will faithfully fulfill all He promised both to the nation of Israel and to those who receive His gift of salvation. God's covenant is based on His unchanging faithfulness and is solely by His grace. We have nothing to offer except our willingness to live by the covenant He has made with us. Give thanks for His covenant.

As people of His new covenant, give God thanks.

B. Give Thanks for God's Covenant People – vv. 16-22

We already noted those to whom God established His covenant, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then to Israel as an everlasting agreement with them. In the promise made to a fledgling nation, He wouldn't allow any nation to harass them. When King Balak came to Balaam asking him to curse Israel, God wouldn't allow it. He gave victories over Og and Sihon on the eastern side of the Jordan River, land that Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh would inherit. God made a promise to His people, and while there are nations today who would seek to destroy them, even a day yet coming when all nations will revolt

against them, God will keep His promise and defend His people for the sake of His covenant.

Those to whom God has made a promise about their salvation, there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. Not trouble or hardship or persecution, or famine or nakedness or danger or sword. When we have the promise of God's covenant, we can rest assured that we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (**Rom 8:35-39**). Give Him thanks because He keeps His word. God's covenant people are called to give thanks.

Give thanks for God's character.

Give thanks for God's covenant.

Give thanks among God's creation.

III. GIVE THANKS AMONG GOD'S CREATION – vv. 23-36

A. Give Thanks for God's Glory – vv. 23-24, 29

To glorify God simply means we honor Him with our praise and worship. It is to exalt His attributes, praise what He does, praise Him for His holiness, trust Him, and obey His Word. By glorifying Him, we affirm His greatness, His sovereignty, and His majesty.

Revelation 5:13-14 “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: ‘To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever.’ The four living creatures said, ‘Amen,’ and the elders fell down and worshipped.”

Revelation 7:12 “Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!”

Everything about God is something for which we are to give Him glory. We give Him glory through our words, our thoughts, and our actions. For His glory we give Him thanks.

Then we give thanks for God's greatness.

B. Give Thanks for God's Greatness – vv. 25-28, 30-33

Psalm 145:1-19 (v. 3 “Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise; His greatness no one can fathom.”)

a thankful heart, one that sings praise to the Lord?

This is a song of praise to God for all the great things He has done for us every day and for that we are to tell the nations that we serve a mighty God.

David invoked Israel to reflect on their past. To think about God’s greatness in all He had done for their nation. To consider His greatness displayed in the creation He made, all of which gives Him glory, and in their reminiscing, give God thanks because He is great and is to be greatly praised. In other words, when you think about God’s greatness don’t skimp on the praise. Pour it on because He deserves all of it and more.

When we consider both the blessings of God and even the hardships He allows and recognize God’s greatness in them all, it will encourage us to have a thankful heart, to sing His praise.

Tony Evans says that “**When you cease giving thanks to the Lord, it’s because you’ve forgotten what He’s done for you.**”

That’s what’s so troubling about this cancel culture movement that wants us to forget our past. God uses the past to help make us grateful for the present.

David says we are to be thankful for God’s glory, then he says we are to be thankful for God’s greatness and he concludes by telling us to be thankful for God’s goodness.

C. Give Thanks for God’s Goodness – vv. 33-36

I think of God’s goodness in two ways, and we see them both in these final verses. I see His compassion and His character, His help and His holiness, His redemption and His righteousness.

1. His redemption

2. His righteousness

His holiness assures our salvation, which gives us reason to give God praise more than all of His creation. Of all He has made in the universe, mankind alone has been given the opportunity and privilege of being redeemed.

When we look back at His provisions and protection and then look forward to His promises, do we have