

## Read Through the Bible

**Week 22:** May 31 – June 5

Readings: 1 Chronicles 26 – 29; II Chronicles 1 – 16; John 11:18-26 – John 14

### Remember the Past...Trust the Future

Mementoes. They are everywhere. All of us have them. They decorate our walls, our desks and our shelves. They even adorn our refrigerators. Some get stored away when we run out of space to display them. They come in many forms – ceramics, photos, magnets, memory scrapbooks and a variety of chatchkies (stuff) which hold special memories for us. Each one tells a story of part of our lives.

Our favorite mementoes are photos – pictures of the people we know and the places we have visited which are special to us. And it's enjoyable to reminisce about those special times as we look through photo albums, glance at a picture on the wall, or just take time to share the photos and the memories with others. Our photos give us and others a glimpse into our past – information about us.

God also gives us a glimpse into the past. His mementoes are chronicled for us in the Bible. The Old Testament provides us with a history of his people, and the New Testament provides the teachings of his Son, Jesus. In fact several times the Bible provides the same details more than once. God really wants us to get this information into our heads and into our hearts. We should be paying careful attention because the Bible is much more than a collection of mementoes. It is God's Word about how and why we are to "walk in the light" (John 12:35-36). He is reaching out to us from the pages of the Bible to tell us he wants a relationship with us, one that is to be imitated in our relationship with others.

This week's reading of 1 & 2 Chronicles is a remembrance of the past not only for the Israelites returning to Jerusalem in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., but also for us. We read a reiteration of the lives of King David, King Solomon, and those kings who followed them

in the Southern Kingdom. The gatekeepers, treasurers, army commanders, overseers, and other officials of King David are chronicled. Their duties and responsibilities required honesty, reliability, and trustworthiness. God had provided the people of Israel with a plan of orderly conduct not only in their individual lives, but also in their community life. The timing, plans and furnishings for the Temple again show God's very specific plans for order.

The writer of Chronicles is calling on the Israelites to remember these truths. God expects nothing less of us. In fact, we learn of God's pleasure of his people through the words of the Queen of Sheba to King Solomon, "Because of the love of your God for Israel and his desire to uphold them forever, he has made you king over them, to maintain justice and righteousness." (2 Chronicles 9:8, NIV)

But Israel's splendor does not remain unspoiled. And God does not hold back the sin-filled mementoes from his Word. The kingdom of his people divides, they fight each other, Egypt attacks, and foreign gods infiltrate the people's worship. Even though King Abijah reminds others that the God of Israel has made a covenant with David and his descendants (2 Chronicles 13:5), and King Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord (2 Chronicles 14:2), God's people could not sustain peace.

Yet, the chronicler writes, "For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him." (2 Chronicles 16:9) The chronicles of the Israeli kingdom give us plenty of illustrations to apply to our lives today.

But the people then did not fully understand the commitment God was asking. So God sent his only Son to show them.

The apostle John chronicles Jesus' last days and last teachings in the gospel we read this week. And in these mementoes we see that even those who were face-to-face with Jesus did not fully understand. Martha, even though she confessed Jesus as the Christ (11:27) did not fully understand. The Sanhedrin obviously did not understand as they thought they could save the whole nation by plotting against Jesus (11:48). The people would not believe all he had taught (12:37). And Peter, one of his closest disciples, did not realize what Jesus was doing (13:7). Philip, another disciple, did not realize who Jesus really is (14:8-9).

Do we understand any better today? We have the advantage of learning from the past that God is constantly seeking our obedience and commitment to him. We have his Word that he is preparing a place for us (John 14:2). But have we made a commitment for our future. Are we putting our trust in the light...so that we might become children of the light (John 12:36)? God has given us these mementoes so we might know his plan for our good that our hearts may be fully committed to him. So, "Come now; let us be on our way" (John 14:31) and live like we remember the past and trust the future as God has taught us.