

Christ in 1 Kings

TRANSCRIPT (AUTO-GENERATED)

In 1993, a young woman by the name of Krickitt Carpenter was involved in a devastating car accident. She experienced a very devastating head trauma.

She had only been married for two months, and she had this accident and was put into a coma for many weeks.

When she woke up, she knew her parents, she knew people from her past, but there was an enormous part of her story that she had no recollection of. She was asked by one of the nurses, are you married? And she said, no, no, I'm not married.

Her husband was there. She had a ring on her finger. There were photos of the wedding around her bed, but she had no recollection of her marriage.

Imagine being in that position. All you can do is try to rebuild your identity from the evidence that is surrounding you. Well, in some ways, that is where we find Israel as we come to the book of 1 Chronicles.

They have experienced an enormous trauma, a national trauma. The unthinkable has happened. Zion, the city of God, has fallen.

Jerusalem has been destroyed. The temple, the presence of the living God by His Spirit, has been destroyed. Ezekiel said that the Spirit would leave the temple, and the Lord did.

And the unthinkable happened. They were taken off into exile. As we heard last week, they were allowed to come back.

The Persians who took over from the Babylonians allowed the people in their exile policy to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild. And so they did. But as they came back to the land, there is a question hanging over them.

Who are we now? Who are we now? And curiously, the chronicler, the author of 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles, begins his answer to this question of who are we now with 9 chapters of names.

Adam, Abraham, Israel, Judah, David. It's as though he opens the family photograph album, doesn't he? And says, look again.

This is where you came from. This is your family. This is your story.

This is your God. Exile has not erased your identity.

The historical context of Chronicles is really important to understand. I wonder if you have any idea of when scholars would date the writing of 1st and 2nd Chronicles. Well, most scholars agree, it's somewhere between 450 BC and 350 BC.

So, let's say around 400 BC. Now, it takes a little while to get your head around the AD and BC. It's going backwards, obviously.

The higher number gets lower as time goes by. So, the chronicler is writing around 400 BC, roughly 150 to 180 years after Jerusalem fell in 586 BC, about a century after the temple was rebuilt in 516 BC.

So, the chronicler is not writing during David's reign. It's not as though it's an eyewitness writing it down, typing it out as it happens. It's probably about 600 years after the reign of David.

The Chronicles was written. You okay with that? It's sort of a little bit interesting, and maybe even a bit shocking.

This is a person writing down the history of Israel a long time after it happened. So, just so we understand, 722 BC, does anyone know what happened then? Does anyone remember?

First exile, the Northern Kingdom. Ben talked about it last week. Assyrians came and they took the Northern Kingdom, the 10 tribes into exile.

They basically sort of disappeared. And then 605 BC, it was Judah and Benjamin, the people of Judah. Their turn, the Babylonians came and took the best of the crop off.

Daniel was with those early people who were deported. Babylon's exile policy was take the best and train them up in our ways, change them. 597 BC, the second deportation.

This is one that exile, Ezekiel was part of. And then 586 BC, the Temple of Jerusalem destroyed. So all these names and numbers, they might seem insignificant, but really, if you can try to get your head around them, it's very helpful.

538 BC, the return begins. 516 BC, the second Temple is completed, exactly 70 years after the destruction of Solomon's Temple in 586. A long time later, 458 BC, Ezra arrives in Jerusalem and has this major spiritual renewal teaching the law.

And then Nehemiah, you remember Nehemiah, the builder of the wall, 445 BC. He rebuilds the wall with a team of people in 52 days. So the wall hasn't been built for 100 years.

What does that tell you about how the people were? I don't think they were quite sitting in their identity. They were traumatized, yes?

They were traumatized in their sense of who they were. And then so about 400 BC, the likely setting of Chronicles.

So when we read Chronicles, and it spends so much time talking about David and the temple and worship and Levites and the promise of an everlasting Davidic throne, it is addressing people for whom the world of David has basically disappeared.

Israel is standing in Jerusalem. There's a temple, but it doesn't feel like Solomon's temple. There's a city, but it doesn't feel like David's city.

There are Jewish people living in the land again, but there's no Davidic king sitting on the throne. And the question underneath everything is this, are we still the people of God? Has the story finished?

Have God's promises failed? Has the covenant with David disappeared? And Chronicles answers, no.

No, go back and remember who you are. You belong to the story, the glorious story of Yahweh. Babylon has not erased your identity.

Exile has not cancelled God's promises. Chronicles is written to a people trying to find their identity after catastrophe.

And its answer is essentially, remember your God, remember your worship, remember your calling, remember David, remember the promise. 1 Chronicles tells the story of a nation coming out of a coma.

Very quickly, if you haven't had a chance to read it, let me just do a flyover. Chapters 1 to 9 talk about the people, the genealogies, the messages you still belong. Chapters 10 to 12, the king.

Saul fails and David becomes king. The Chronicle gets David onto the stage of his story very quickly. Chapters 13 to 16 talk about the ark and the presence of God.

Chapter 17, the promise of a Davidic lion that there would be a house built that would last forever, a kingdom that would never end. 1 Chronicles 17, the great Davidic promise. Chapters 18 to 20 talks about the victories.

Chapter 21 to 29, the temple that David never builds but he prepares for it. The people of God are in a threshold moment, aren't they? It's a drawn out season of threshold, but they are affected deeply by what we might call a life quake.

It is an enormous upheaval, a disruption of the way things normally were and they are questioning their identity in that.

Sometimes when we are preaching these messages, it's hard to find where you find the application. I think many of us know what it is to live in threshold moments. Is that true?

When things don't turn out the way you fully expect, there is loss, maybe loss of loved ones. Sometimes there is loss of job, isn't it? Like, you lose a job or you lose the status you once had in a job.

And it messes with your head, loss of dreams. They are hard times. Identity is enormous, would you agree?

I finished up at our last church over 11 years ago. We were at that church for 19 years. And it was a really great experience to be at that church.

We saw a lot of growth. The church is not about just growth, but we sort of saw the church grow to be one of the bigger Baptist churches in Sydney. And it was this sort of incredible journey we were on.

And anyway, we finished up there and we came to Hornsby, and we were excited about Hornsby. And Hornsby was, say, the building as a metaphor was quite dilapidated. And I remember my first day coming to Hornsby Baptist Church.

And I went up the upstairs into the hall, and I was by myself, and I went up to the running man, the little exit sign. It was a stairway that came off the side of a double story hall.

And it was a bit shocking because when I went to it, it had a pew, like a full wooden pew, in the roof, holding the roof up. It was like, that's interesting.

And then as I came closer to, before I got to the exit sign, I noticed a big sign on the wall that said, don't fill this with more than about 180 people, because it's not sound. It's like, oh, that's great.

And then I went over to the exit, and it said, please do not use this exit, because it's not safe. And that's a little bit of a metaphor for how things felt when I first arrived. Just for me, I sort of thought I had been sent to exile.

The treasurer came in and said, it was freezing cold in my office. He said, you can't use that heater. We don't have enough money for that.

So I turned the other heater on, which was a blow heater, and it sparked and created a fire. It was on fire. I went into the kitchen, and it was an agar plate of bacteria, like in the microwave.

I said, Lord, have mercy. What did I do? What did I do?

And to be honest, I'm sort of joking about it, but I'm not because my identity was wrapped up in my job. And I sort of felt like, wow, Lord, am I being punished? Because this doesn't feel the same as a sort of going concern.

But what I discovered was God had plans that I would be part of with an amazing group of people. And God has done such wonderful things in the last 11 years.

And you sort of got to hang in there for the ride and look around at the way the metaphor changed. This is something wonderful, this building that we're in, and so is the church we're part of.

But I say all that because we experience loss, loss of dreams, we experience trauma in life, and it affects our identity, and it's hard to get up off the ground, isn't it? When you get rocked, and you ask the question, Lord, do you know where I am?

Like, do you know who I am? Who am I? And that is exactly what these people, the people of Israel are experiencing.

It's drawn out over hundreds of years, but they're like, whoa, God, are you still our God?

And 1 Chronicles finishes, I mean, these one sermon, one book, sermon series thing that we're in is pretty rough. So we pick one passage, and our passage is 1 Chronicles 29, 10 to 19.

And it's where David prays, a prayer that is meant to lift the people's eyes up to who their God is and who they are under their God. The kingdom belongs to Yahweh, David prays. Everything we have comes from Yahweh, and Yahweh wants our heart.

It's an amazing portion of Scripture. The kingdom belongs to Yahweh. If your identity is under attack right now, can I encourage you to just sit in this prayer?

A weird prayer that was written by someone other than David, for David, and somehow inspired by the Spirit of God and the Word of God. Let me read again verse 10.

David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, praise be to you, Lord, the God of our father Israel.

From everlasting to everlasting, yours Lord is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour for everything in heaven and earth is yours.

Yours Lord is the kingdom, you are exalted as head over all, wealth and honour come from you, you are the ruler of all things, and your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

Now, our God, we give you thanks and praise, your glorious name. David begins, praise be to you, Lord God.

And then comes this cascading avalanche of claims about God, which we sing about, and I forgot to mention, I think, to the band, this would be a good song to sing.

Yours is the kingdom, the power, the glory, majesty, splendour, everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom. You are exalted as head over all.

This is the greatest king of Israel, saying this. The warrior king, the man who captured Jerusalem, the man who defeated Israel's enemies, David, the man whose name would define Israel's monarchy, the Davidic line.

And David says, this isn't my kingdom. Yours is the kingdom. His authority is delegated authority.

His kingdom, David's kingdom, exists beneath God's kingdom. To the returning exiles who say, we don't have a king anymore, the Chronicle writer says, yes, you do. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom.

Human kingdoms come and go. Our identity is often based on our perceived kingdom, isn't it? I'm the king of my kingdom and you're the queen of your kingdom.

And we think our identity is based on that, but we're being reminded in this great prayer. Our identity is based on who we belong to, who is our king. The true king still reigns, David says.

Kingdoms really do come and go, don't they? Your kingdom, it goes up and down like the share market. And so do the big kingdoms.

Think about this, Babylon rose. Babylon was replaced by, yell it out. That doesn't work.

Babylon replaced by Persia, Greece replaced Persia as the world power, Rome came after Greece, and then empires fractured, the Ottomans rose, Spain rose, Britain ruled an empire in which the sun supposedly never set, the Soviet Union became a

superpower and disappeared, and are trying to come back, and the USA became the dominant global power, and they're probably sort of waning a little bit now. Every kingdom has a beginning and a rise, and they all decline, amen?

Kings come and go, kingdoms rise and fall. Yahweh never vacates the throne. Israel's identity is Exodus 19.6.

Yahweh says, though the whole earth is mine, you shall be my treasured possession, my kingdom of priests, my holy nation. You are mine. And that's what the people of Israel need to remember.

And the truth is true for us. If Yahweh is our God, we are subjects of Him as the King. And the chaos of this world we are in.

Anybody watching the news and sort of scratching their head a little bit about AI and climate change? To me, it sort of feels like, okay, Lord, I know you're in charge, but this sort of seems like things are heating up.

Yahweh hasn't left the throne, amen? Yahweh hasn't left the throne. He's the King of the universe.

And David says, everything we have comes from Him. Verse 14, David turns from kingdom to stewardship. He says, who am I?

And who are my people that we should be able to give as generously as this? They're just doing this big fundraiser for the temple. Everything comes from you and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

Isn't that a great line? We are foreigners and strangers in your sight as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow without hope.

Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your holy name comes from your hand and all of it belongs to you. David could say, look what we have done. Instead he says, who am I?

Who are my people that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you and we have given you only what comes from your hand. Anyone looking for a memory verse?

It's a good memory verse, isn't it? Just lock that one away. Everything comes from you, Lord God.

And we have given you only what comes from your hand. O to live in that reality. O to live in that reality.

Yahweh provides our needs. He is the King of the kingdom. And our identity is found in being in need of him providing for us, not our identity as someone who is independent from him.

We are dependent. Jesus says this, doesn't he, in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, don't worry about tomorrow.

It's got enough worries, but let God provide for you today. Israel's identity is grounded in the loving favour of their God who will provide for their needs.

And as the people grapple with their identity, it's essential for them to realise that their true King, the theocratic King, is the manna provider, the everything provider. He is the King. He's their provider.

But David picks up, he wants something significant from them. He wants their heart. He wants their heart.

Verse 18, I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you.

Lord, the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever and keep their hearts loyal to you.

And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands, statutes and decrees and to do everything to build the palatial structure for which I have provided.

David says, I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. After all the gold that was collected and silver and the administration and the organisation, God wants something deeper. He wants their heart.

Keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever and keep their hearts loyal to you. If only that happened. It's sort of spooky, I find, reading this thinking it's towards the end of the prophetic utterance of God.

This is towards the end of the Old Testament prophetic insight, the word of God being communicated. There's 400 years of silence coming after this. It's one of the latter books that we find when it was written in the Old Testament.

And there's a writer putting back 600 years before into the mouth of David what we should have learned, having watched all the pain of disobedience.

It's like a eulogy, hearing a eulogy before you get to the end of your life and saying, what really mattered? The heart mattered. Solomon's wandering heart was his problem.

And our hearts wandering is our problem too. Are we still God's people? This is the question that they had.

Has the story finished? Have God's promises failed? Has the covenant with David disappeared?

David's prayer declares that Yahweh is their God. He's their provider. And He is their heart satisfier.

And that's sort of how it finishes in 1 Chronicles, this period of time of revelation from God. And then we have this 400 year period, where everyone knows something's not quite right. The people of Israel have returned.

They were given the Book of Chronicles to inspire hope, to invite them to lift their eyes up again, to retell the story of their origins, to believe again in the identity that they have as the people of God.

But their identity could never be fulfilled until the true king in the line of David turned up. Jesus Christ is King, Supplier and Satisfier, Amen.

He is the true king that David talked about, the supplier of all of our needs and the Satisfier of our hearts desire.

Matthew 1 starts off and says, Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the throne that appears empty at the end of Israel's history eventually has its king. The true son, yet unlike David, his reign will never end. His kingdom cannot be conquered.

His throne cannot be vacated by death. He rises, ascends, and reigns. David's prayer lands in the New Testament, and it's what's true for us.

The kingdom belongs to Yahweh, becomes the declared truth. Christ is King. Everything we have comes from Yahweh, becomes the declared truth.

Christ is Provider. Yahweh wants our heart, becomes the declared truth. Christ is Satisfier.

Has your identity been rocked by how life has and is turning out? Has your identity been rocked? As a pastor, I know there's lots of people in the room who are feeling that exact thing.

Just living in a place of pain and confusion and grief, the trauma of things not turning out the way you hoped they would. Where do you go?

Well, I think this incredible prayer that was written around 400 AD, from the mouth of a king that lived 600 years before, and speaks to us 3000 years later, speaks to us today, the king who is Jesus is worthy of our surrender.

So whatever you're at with your identity, can I encourage you? Jesus, the king of kings, is worthy of our surrender. The provider is worthy of our trust, the satisfier is worthy of our heart.

In Christ, if you are walking with Jesus by faith today, you are God's people. Amen? You're part of the church.

Your story is not finished. Can I encourage you? That's not just hopeful words.

Your story is not finished because Jesus is the one who takes crosses and turns them into resurrections. Amen? He brings back the dead.

Christ the King is worthy of our surrender. Christ the Provider is worthy of our trust. Christ the Satisfier is worthy of our heart.

Can we just stop and reflect in the presence of God on our identity? Father, our Father in Heaven, we confess to you that so quickly do we build our identity around things that are shifting, are not stable, are not on the rock.

But I pray for my brothers and sisters who are struggling with their identity right now, who have experienced the trauma of life, of loss, and they're struggling to remember who they are.

Thank you for this passage, this whole book that we've looked at today, Lord God. Thank you that our identity is found in where we sit in the big story.

That we are the people of God because of what Christ has accomplished, and because of your gift of the Spirit.

Lord, I pray that you might prompt the people you want to bless to head over to that prayer corner, and receive comfort from their church family. Receive the supernatural and empowerment that you want to give them through prayer.

Lord, thank you that there is always hope in Christ. And our identity is sure in Him and His promises. And all the people said, Amen.

If you'd like some prayer, please head over to that corner, and the team are going to lead us in worship.