

*If you return to me and keep my
commandments and do them,
though your outcasts are under
the farthest skies, I will gather
them from there and bring them
to the place at which I have
chosen to establish my name.*

THE WORD ON FIRE BIBLE

For McCanna Sinise

WE ALSO BOAST IN OUR
SUFFERINGS, KNOWING
THAT SUFFERING PRODUCES
ENDURANCE, AND ENDURANCE
PRODUCES CHARACTER, AND
CHARACTER PRODUCES HOPE,
AND HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT
US, BECAUSE GOD'S LOVE HAS
BEEN POURED INTO OUR HEARTS
THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT
HAS BEEN GIVEN TO US.

ROMANS 5:3-5



EXILE AND RETURN

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 WORD on FIRE_®

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About Bishop Robert Barron

Bishop Robert Barron is the Bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester and the founder of Word on Fire Catholic Ministries. He received a master's degree in philosophy from the Catholic University of America in 1982 and a doctorate in sacred theology from the Institut Catholique de Paris in 1992.

Bishop Barron was ordained a priest in 1986 in the Archdiocese of Chicago, and then appointed to the theological faculty of Mundelein Seminary in 1992. He has also served as a visiting professor at the University of Notre Dame and at the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas. He was twice scholar in residence at the Pontifical North American College at the Vatican.

He served as the Rector/President of Mundelein Seminary / University of St. Mary of the Lake from 2012 until 2015.

On July 21, 2015, Pope Francis appointed Bishop Barron to be Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. He was ordained bishop on September 8, 2015. On June 2, 2022, he was appointed the ninth Bishop of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester in Minnesota.

About Word on Fire

Word on Fire Catholic Ministries is a nonprofit global media apostolate that supports the work of Bishop Robert Barron and reaches millions of people to draw them into—or back to—the Catholic faith.

Word on Fire is evangelical; it proclaims Jesus Christ as the source of conversion and new life. Word on Fire is Catholic; it utilizes the tremendous resources of the Roman Catholic tradition—art, architecture, poetry, philosophy, theology, and the lives of the saints—in order to explain and interpret the event of Jesus Christ. Word on Fire is missionary; it uses media both old and new to spread the faith in the culture and share the gifts of the Church that Jesus wants his people to enjoy.

A Note About the Translation

The translation used for *The Word on Fire Bible* is the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Catholic Edition (NRSV-CE). It first appeared in 1989, and has received wide acclaim and broad support from academics and pastors as a Bible for all Christians.

The translation received the imprimatur of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1991, granting official approval for Catholic use in private study and devotional reading.

The NRSV-CE stands out among other translations because of its accuracy and readability. According to the translation committee, it is “as literal as possible” in adhering to the ancient texts and only “as free as necessary” to make the meaning clear in graceful, understandable English.

It's a wonderful translation—both for those who have never read the Bible and for those who have studied it for years.

About the Angelico Typeface

Quotations in *The Word on Fire Bible* are set in Angelico, a custom font drawn especially for this Bible. Its proportions were inspired by the designs of Renaissance typographer Erhard Ratdolt, and the font is named after Renaissance friar and fresco painter Blessed Fra Angelico, whose example of holiness and artistic mastery was a major inspiration for the visual style of this Bible.

HE WHO WISHES TO PAINT
CHRIST'S STORY MUST
LIVE WITH CHRIST.

BLESSED FRA ANGELICO

About the Cover Design

Design by Nicolas Fredrickson and Michael Stevens | Essay by Nicolas Fredrickson

After the reign of King Solomon, the kingdom of Israel was split in two: the northern kingdom, still called Israel, and the southern kingdom, called Judah. Around 722 BC, following centuries of moral corruption, Israel was destroyed by Assyria and its inhabitants deported from their land. About twenty years later, Judah, too, was besieged. Hezekiah, the king of Judah, turned to the great prophet Isaiah, who foretold that the Lord would remove the Assyrian threat (2 Kings 19:32–34). He told Hezekiah that Judah would be safe for a time, but following their moral downfall under future kings, Babylon would come and take them into captivity (2 Kings 20:16–18).

In 605 BC, the Babylonians came to besiege Jerusalem, taking with them members of the nobility and many temple treasures. In 597 BC, Babylon invaded again—this time taking King Jehoiachin, his family, and thousands of officials, warriors, and skilled laborers as captives, and more treasures from the temple and palace. Jehoiachin was replaced by King Zedekiah, who reigned for eleven years before rebelling against Babylon, leading to the final destruction and deportation of Jerusalem in 587 BC. The remaining population, aside from the poorest of the poor, were taken as prisoners or put to death. The walls of Jerusalem were flattened, and the temple itself was destroyed. Anything that wasn’t of value in the city was burned.

But Babylon’s reign wasn’t forever. In 539 BC, Babylon was overtaken by the Persians, led by King Cyrus. As Isaiah prophesied (Isa. 44:28), Cyrus played a major role in the restoration of Jerusalem by allowing the exiles to return home and funding the rebuilding. Three aspects of this restoration played out through Ezra, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah, respectively: (1) the restoration of the Mosaic Law in the hearts of the Jewish people, (2) the restoration of the temple, and (3) the restoration of Jerusalem’s walls. In the cover design, these three facets are laid out, top to bottom, in the center of the design. Surrounding the center panel are the doors of a gate with vertical bars, symbolizing the return to the freedom of the Promised Land after decades of captivity.

But we read that once Jerusalem was rebuilt, it was an inferior version (Ezra 3:12–13). Significantly, there’s no mention of God’s glory returning to the temple. The restoration, then, remained incomplete. In the design, there is a subtle nod to this in the entry arch of the walls. The brick at the top center of an arch is called a keystone. All of the other bricks anchor to this one, and without it, the whole arch would crumble. The missing keystone here symbolizes the incomplete restoration. Israel will never be truly complete without the coming keystone, the Messiah, Jesus. The rebuilding of Jerusalem itself wasn’t meant to be the *denouement*, the great finale of God’s story. The Promised Land was always a shadow of the heavenly kingdom. Centuries later, there would be a *new law* and a *new temple* embodied in the person of Jesus, who would build his *new Jerusalem*, the Church.

Hebrew text

The Hebrew text reads “Hear, O Israel” (*Shema, Israel*) and comes from Deuteronomy 6:4–9. These verses, along with two other passages (Deut. 11:13–21; Num. 15:37–41), make up the famous Jewish profession of faith known as the *shema*. Jesus quotes the *shema* when he is asked about the greatest commandment in the Law (Mark 12:29–30; Matt. 22:37–38).

Lock

At the edge of the design, there is a latch that is in the open position. This doorway into freedom was once locked like a cell, but now is open as the Jewish people return to their homeland.

Latin inscription

The inscription “Lumen ad revelationem gentium et gloriam plebis tuae Israel” (a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel) comes from Simeon’s prophecy in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2:29–32). Upon seeing the child Jesus in the temple, he says that he has seen God’s salvation (Jesus’ name means “God saves”) and a light “for glory to your people Israel.” The mention of “glory” here points to the fact that though God’s glory had never entered the rebuilt temple, his glory has finally returned in the person of Jesus, fulfilling Ezekiel’s prophecy from centuries before (Ezek. 43:2–5).





1 Chronicles

This book tells the story of King David. In 1 Chronicles 17, God promises David an heir whose “throne shall be established forever.” This crown of David, integrated with a crown of thorns, points forward to the new Davidic King, Jesus, who mounted the throne of the cross to rule over all the world.



2 Chronicles

This book follows Solomon and subsequent kings of Judah up to the Babylonian exile. Because of the moral corruption under many of these kings, Judah ultimately falls into exile for decades. Eventually, as Isaiah prophesied (Isa. 45:1), King Cyrus of Persia defeats Babylon and issues a decree that allows the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem.



Ezra

The priest Ezra restores the practice of worship in the life of the Jewish people when they return from exile. The scroll says in Hebrew, “Hear, O Israel.” This is taken from the Mosaic Law, and became the first line of a profession of faith known as the *shema*, which would be recited twice daily by the Jewish people as a reminder that YHWH alone is their God and the one they must love and obey.



Nehemiah

Though the temple had been rebuilt, Jerusalem’s walls were still in ruins. Nehemiah, a Jew living in Susa, takes this to God in prayer. Soon after, the king of Persia, Artaxerxes, sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem along with the materials necessary to rebuild the city walls.



Tobit

This book introduces us to Tobit, a faithful Israelite living in exile in Assyria. Upon becoming blind, he sends his son Tobias on a mission to retrieve ten talents of silver. God sends the angel Raphael to accompany Tobias.



Judith

Holofernes, an Assyrian general, leads an army to besiege Bethulia, where a Jewish widow named Judith is living. Because of Judith’s beauty and wit, she is able to go into the Assyrian camp and enter the company of Holofernes. One night when he is drunk, she beheads him with his own sword, saving her people from the Assyrians.



Esther

Esther, a faithful Jew, is chosen as queen by the Persian king Ahasuerus. Later, because of the righteous defiance of Esther’s cousin, Mordecai, a royal official named Haman plots against the Jews. Esther outsmarts Haman and, despite the risk to her own life, comes to the king on behalf of the Israelites, ultimately saving them from destruction.



1 Maccabees

This book recounts how Antiochus IV Epiphanes, leader of the Seleucid Empire, outlawed the Jewish religion and “erected a desolating sacrilege on the altar of burnt offering” (1 Macc. 1:54). Judas Maccabeus leads a guerrilla army to drive out the Seleucid occupation, reclaiming and rededicating the temple and celebrating for eight days—a story remembered with the menorah during Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights.

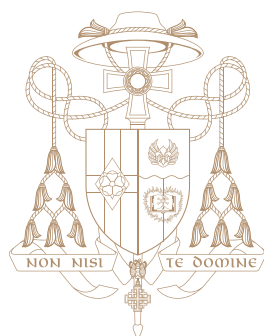


2 Maccabees

This icon depicts a palm frond, a symbol often used in sacred art to depict martyrs. Under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Jews were pressured to renounce their faith. In 2 Maccabees 7, however, we read an inspiring story of a woman and her seven sons, all of whom would rather die than deny God.

The Word on Fire Bible

A BIBLE FOR RESTLESS HEARTS



Bishop Robert Barron

WHEN I WAS A CHILD of eleven or twelve, my parents gave me a Bible as a Christmas present. Like many others before and since, I eagerly set out with the intention of reading my new treasure from cover to cover. I think I got through the tenth chapter of Genesis before giving up. Prompted by a suggestion of my father, I recommenced, this time with the New Testament. Somewhere in the first third of the Gospel of Matthew, I ran out of steam. Now, I realize I was only a young man at the time, but the fact remains: the Bible is a hard book. To say to someone “Just start reading it” is about as helpful as recommending to a novice who has never encountered a word of Shakespeare, “Just pick up a collection of the Bard’s plays and enjoy.” The Church has realized from the beginning that we need assistance if we are to read the Scriptures with profit. We require precisely the interpretive lens provided by the great scholars, saints, mystics, popes, and prophets who have gone before us—those who have, in the course of time, been recognized as masters of the sacred writings.

This realization informs the innumerable “study Bibles” that have emerged in recent years. By this I mean editions of the Scriptures that include, alongside the biblical texts themselves, commentaries, explanations, and prompts for further exploration. *The Word on Fire Bible* is in this genre, but it has several distinctive features that make it particularly relevant to our time.

First, it is specially geared toward those who, for a variety of reasons, are not affiliated with the Christian faith, or indeed with any organized religion. In the course of the last forty years or so, there has been a massive increase, at least in the Western countries, in the number of those who claim no religious identity. In the United States, the percentage of the unaffiliated has risen from 5% in the early 1970s to 26% in 2019. And if we focus on millennials, the figure rises to fully 40%. *The Word on Fire Bible* is designed to appeal to nonbelievers, searchers, and those with far more questions about religion than answers.

Secondly and relatedly, its commentaries hone in on two simple but fundamental questions: Who is God, and who is Jesus Christ? We understand that the religiously unaffiliated are unlikely to be interested

in intra-ecclesial squabbles or the minutiae of theology. They want to get to the heart of the matter. And so this Bible sheds particular light on the peculiar, puzzling, unnerving, and endlessly fascinating figure that stands at the very heart of the biblical story—namely, the God of Israel—and on the one whom St. Paul characterized as the “image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), the first-century Jewish teacher and miracle worker who spoke and acted in the very person of God and who now, Christians claim, reigns as risen Lord of all creation.

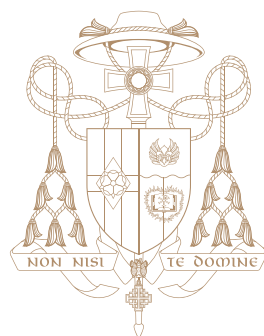
Thirdly, *The Word on Fire Bible* brings in a chorus of voices from the great theological and spiritual tradition in order to sing the meaning of the Scriptures. The reader will hear from Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, John Henry Newman, Thérèse of Lisieux, John Paul II, and many, many other teachers in the way of the Spirit. And since it is a Word on Fire Bible, it also includes my own voice as well. For over thirty years, I have been preaching from the Bible as part of my ordinary work as a priest, and since about 2000, I have been sharing homilies on radio and podcasts in connection with my evangelical work. Excerpts from a wide variety of these sermons and other commentaries are featured in this text. Once again, the majority of these elaborations center on the sorts of questions that religious “outsiders” and spiritual inquirers are likely to ask.

A fourth and final distinctive element in this Bible is the focus on the *via pulchritudinis* (the way of beauty). Catholicism is a very beautiful religion, and that beauty has the power to claim us. The beautiful does not merely entertain; rather, it invades, chooses, and changes the one to whom it deigns to appear. It opens the mind to a consideration of ever higher forms of the beautiful, conducting finally to the transcendent source of beauty itself. And so *The Word on Fire Bible* features many striking works of art as well as literary explanations of those pieces—all designed to introduce the seeker to Christ through the aesthetic splendor that he has inspired.

The Bible is indeed the greatest book ever written. It has shaped the cultures of the world in countless ways, and it contains the words of everlasting life. But for so many today, it is largely opaque, indecipherable—at best a puzzling text from a prescientific age. My fondest hope is that this Word on Fire edition of the Sacred Scriptures can bring God’s Word to life in a fresh way, especially for those who, whether they fully know it or not, are restlessly seeking the Lord.



How to Approach the Bible



Bishop Robert Barron

WHEN LEADERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH gathered in the mid-twentieth century for the Second Vatican Council, they recognized the need for a renewal when it came to reading and appreciating the Bible. They called for greater study of the Bible among laypeople, placing the Scriptures more fully at the center of the liturgy, and making the sacred writings the “soul of theology.” But that dream is still, I believe, largely unrealized.

In point of fact, when we consult the numerous studies of the ever-increasing army of the religiously unaffiliated, we discover that the Bible is often a prime reason why people, especially young people, are *alienated* from the Christian faith. We hear that it is nonsense written by prescientific people who knew nothing about the way the world works; that it is bronze-age mythology; that it encourages genocide, violence against women, slavery, and militaristic aggression; that its central character is, in the language of one atheist provocateur, like King Lear in Act Five, except more insane.

So how can we recover the depth and power of the Bible in the twenty-first century? How can we hold off the many charges made against it? In the course of this brief essay, I would like to propose five interpretive strategies.

A first one is this: always be critically attentive to the variety of genres on display in the Scriptures. The Bible is not so much a book as a library, a collection of books. One of the standard questions posed by inquirers today is whether the Bible should be taken literally. In a way, it’s as pointless a question as whether one should take the library literally. It depends, of course, on which section you’re in! If you find a book on a history shelf, you might indeed read it straightforwardly, but if you take a book off a poetry shelf or from the fiction department, you would be foolish to read either text literally. If in your wanderings through the library, you come across Richard Ellmann’s celebrated biography of James Joyce, you would read it through entirely different lenses than you would to decipher Joyce’s own *Finnegans Wake*. The library that is the Bible contains seventy-three books, written by a wide variety of different authors, addressed to various audiences at differing moments in history, concerning a myriad of themes, and employing a plethora of literary genres. Readily identifiable within the biblical corpus

are legend, saga, tall tale, history, poetry, song, prophecy, biography, epistolary literature, and apocalypse, and each of these literary types requires a particular kind of interpretive approach. Very often, both critics and advocates of the Bible look for a univocal answer to the question of scriptural interpretation: it's all history; it's all mythology; it's all spiritual poetry; etc. But these easy answers are counterindicated. To give one example of the utility of attending to genre: much of the confusion—largely generated by various forms of twentieth-century fundamentalism—regarding the “scientific” interpretation of the first three chapters of the book of Genesis could be avoided by attending to the kind of literature we are dealing with in those astonishing passages. The four Gospels, too, call for their own distinct approach. While they are indeed historical accounts of a real person bearing a remarkable consensus in essentials, each Evangelist is focused on particular theological insights and interests, and they differ on certain secondary details such as chronology. We should not expect them to give us history in the modern journalistic sense, but rather four unique and stylized portraits of the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, handed down by the people who knew him.

Having clarified that the Bible is, in one sense, a library of books, I would also stress—and this constitutes the second interpretive strategy—that Scripture is, in another sense, one book. When I was coming of age in the university and seminary, the dominant form of scriptural analysis was the so-called historical-critical method. The stated purpose of this mode of interpretation is to use a variety of tools—linguistic, historical, archaeological, etc.—to determine the intentions of the human authors of the various biblical books. In other words, what was in the mind of Jeremiah or Isaiah or the author of 2 Samuel as he addressed his audience? There are virtues to this approach, to be sure, and a sound scriptural interpreter should never set it aside completely. But the historical-critical method also carries with it a shadow—namely, the tendency to lose the forest for the trees. As the historical critic focuses in on the intentions of the various authors writing to their disparate audiences at different historical moments, he can lose sight of the overall purpose of the Bible considered as a totality. He can overlook the fact that, despite all of its sometimes disconcerting variety, the Bible is finally telling one great story, or perhaps better, unfolding one great drama. This theo-dramatic consciousness makes the interpreter

attentive to the themes, patterns, rhymes, and trajectories contained within the entire Bible. When, for example, the Church Fathers saw deep correspondences between Old Testament anticipations and New Testament fulfillments—what they called “types and antitypes”—they were operating out of this hermeneutical framework. Hans Urs von Balthasar taught that in a truly great work of art, each section of the whole relates harmonically to every other section and to the totality of the work. Think for example of the relationship between the parts and the whole in the Parthenon or in Chartres Cathedral or in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The same dynamic obtains, Balthasar argued, within the Bible, every book of which speaks in some sense to every other and contributes to the sweep of the story as a whole.

And this segues neatly into the third of our interpretive strategies, which is to find a “canon within the canon” of Scripture. Some of our greatest biblical masters have held that one teaching or saying within the Bible can function as the key to opening the door of the entire Bible. In his seminal treatise *De doctrina Christiana*, St. Augustine proposed Jesus' command to love God above all things and our neighbor for the sake of God as the ultimate criterion of correct biblical reading. That is to say, every story, poem, doctrine, or saying in the Bible should be read as ultimately designed to inculcate love of God and neighbor. And if we turn the principle around, we find that any interpretation of a biblical passage that militates against the love of God and neighbor is necessarily a bad interpretation. The Church Father Origen of Alexandria, who was one of the finest biblical minds in the tradition, opined that the canon within the canon is the mysterious scene from the book of Revelation in which a Lamb, “standing as if it had been slaughtered” (Rev. 5:6), opens the seven seals of the sacred scroll in the heavenly court. The scroll, on Origen's reading, stands for the Scriptures, and the Lamb is the crucified and risen Jesus. The point is that Jesus alone truly explains the meaning of the Bible. Therefore, if we read a biblical passage in such a way that our interpretation is out of step with what was revealed in the dying and rising of the Lord, we have necessarily engaged in an inadequate reading. This strategy is precisely what enabled Origen and the tradition that followed him to read the violent passages of the Old Testament—so objectionable to people today—as allegories of the spiritual struggle against evil.

A fourth strategy is one that I learned from the theologian William Placher: to distinguish between what is in the Bible and what the Bible teaches. Written over a thousand years, from around 1000 BC to AD 100, but embodying traditions that go back much further, the biblical books carry with them an awful lot of cultural baggage from the ancient world. In the Bible we can find ideas about cosmology, medicine, disease control, and the weather that are clearly outmoded, and we can find cultural practices such as the denigration of women, the marginalization of children, slavery, etc. that are patently morally objectionable. These things are undoubtedly in the Bible, but they are not, I would argue, what the Bible is teaching. In order to discover the true doctrine of the Scriptures, we have to attend, as I stated earlier, not to particular passages taken out of context, but rather to the overarching themes and patterns within the Bible as a whole. And what allows us to intuit these central teachings is precisely the long and disciplined conversation across time, engaged in by the community formed by the biblical texts. This back-and-forth argument—exemplified, for instance, in the Jewish context by Talmudic scholars and in the Christian context by scholastic theologians—is the sifting process by which wheat and chaff are separated.

And this conduces to the fifth and final of my recommendations for correct interpretation: always remember that the Bible is the Church's book. The Scriptures as we know them were put in final canonical form sometime in the fourth century. This "canonization" represented the culmination of a centuries-long process—both Jewish and Christian—of analysis, debate, and judgment. Many books fell away in the course of time, since it was determined—again, by both Jewish and Christian authorities—that they did not adequately represent the faith of the community. Though skeptics today hold that certain books, the Gnostic Gospels for example, did not make it into the canon due to power struggles in the ancient Church, a much more satisfying explanation is that these texts were correctly judged not to be reliable witnesses to Christian revelation. The point is that the books of the Bible were assembled by the Church and for the Church. According to the practice in most universities in the West, it is indeed possible to read the Bible as a mildly interesting example of ancient near-Eastern literature, but this is to do terrible violence to the Scriptures, tearing them away from the only context in which they truly make sense. Their purpose,

ultimately, is to tell the great story of Israel, which reaches its climax in the dying and rising of the Messiah, and to draw all people into communion with Jesus Christ. The proper framework for reading the Bible, therefore, is ecclesial and evangelical.


And this is the Christocentric orientation I should like you to have as you turn to the pages of *The Word on Fire Bible*. I invite you to read it with real thoughtfulness according to the strategies outlined above. I'm convinced this exercise will both call forth your critical attention and awaken your spiritual curiosity—and will lead you, I fondly hope, to the one who says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).



Features of the Word on Fire Bible

Origen
(184–253)

On Prayer






Church Father Commentary

To enrich the reading of *The Word on Fire Bible*, we have included commentary from the Church Fathers, the earliest Christian theologians. These quotations are identified by a beige background and gold Chi Rho, an ancient graphical symbol for Jesus made by superimposing the first two letters from the word “Christ” in Greek (ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ). Because many of the Church Fathers lived during or shortly after the time of the Apostles, these commentaries represent some of the oldest Christian writings in existence aside from the New Testament itself.

Pope St. John Paul II
(1920–2005)

Man and Woman
He Created Them





Recent Author Commentary

Writings by more recent saints and spiritual masters are found within a light gray background marked with the IHS Christogram. This icon was popularized in the fifteenth century and, similar to the Chi Rho, is a symbol made from the first letters of Jesus’ name in Greek (ΙΗΣΟΥΣ). Between the Church Father and Recent Author excerpts, nearly two thousand years of spiritual wisdom surrounds the biblical text to enhance your study.



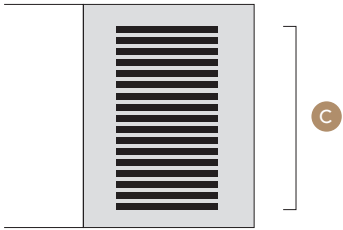
Single-Column Bible Text

The single-column format of the biblical text provides a legible and immersive reading experience inspired by the layout of a novel (A). This design encourages longer reading sessions and facilitates deeper study.



Bishop Barron Commentary

In addition to quotations from the Fathers and recent authors, this Bible also features a wealth of commentary by Bishop Robert Barron. Shorter commentaries appear in a two column layout above or below the Scripture text (B). Longer, more detailed commentaries appear in a single column on a gray background (C).



Word Study



Hebrew and Greek Word Studies

In his commentary, Bishop Barron often highlights terms from the original languages. These words are called out using the format at left, allowing you to see each word as it appears in the Hebrew or Greek Scriptures.



Via Pulchritudinis Art Commentary

Throughout this Bible, exquisite selections of art from across the centuries illuminate pertinent Scripture passages. Each piece of artwork is accompanied by an essay to connect the work to the Scriptures. As you reflect, you are invited to draw nearer to Christ through the *via pulchritudinis* (the way of beauty).



1 CHRONICLES

Introduction to 1 Chronicles

Justin Kalan

The first book of Chronicles is, at first glance, a rather peculiar book. First, it doesn't seem to say much that is new, since most of its content is already contained in other scriptural books, primarily 2 Samuel and 1 Kings. Second, the book starts with nine chapters of genealogies, starting from Adam and going all the way down through David's descendants. Needless to say, this is not the most exciting opening to a book in the Bible. Nevertheless, if we attend to this book carefully, we can glean important spiritual lessons.

When one reads 1 Chronicles, it becomes clear that there is a strong focus on worship, particularly as it relates to the Jerusalem temple and the famous ark of the covenant. This focus is no doubt due to the time 1 Chronicles was written, most likely shortly after Israel's return from the Babylonian exile when Israel rebuilt its sacred temple. The author or "chronicler," who was perhaps the biblical character of Ezra, sought to teach Israel the importance of proper worship by reexamining the life of Israel's greatest king, David. The book touches on a number of David's accomplishments, but his preparation for building the temple is central. After recording the genealogy of Israel from Adam down to David's descendants, the book covers David's life as king, starting with Saul's death and ending with his own.

One of the first actions David takes as king in 1 Chronicles is to try to bring out the ark of the covenant from Kiriath-jearim, where it had been during Saul's reign and some years before that. The ark's journey falters when Uzzah, one of the men driving the cart with the ark, is struck dead after touching the ark to stabilize it. Uzzah's death causes David to temporarily give up his plan to move the ark, and he leaves it at the house of Obed-edom for three months. According to 1 Chronicles, "The LORD blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that he had" (1 Chron. 13:14). During this time, David prepares a tent for the ark in Jerusalem and decides to try once again to move the ark. The ark finally arrives in Israel with much fanfare, and the people worship before it. There is an intriguing parallel here with a set of events in Luke's Gospel. In Luke, instead of the ancient ark of the covenant being moved, a new Ark, one who houses God himself within her womb, moves to Judea and stays for three months, not in the house of Obed-edom, but in the house of Zechariah and Elizabeth. When

this new Ark arrives, fanfare accompanies it, this time not from a king and his court but from a tiny baby in Elizabeth's womb.

Viewing the ark narrative in 1 Chronicles in conjunction with Luke allows us to see the importance of Mary, of whom the great ark was a mere type, and to appreciate God's special presence within her. Just as the house of Obed-edom was blessed, so also those who welcome this new Ark into their homes will be blessed, not because of the Ark itself but because of the divine presence within the Ark. Just as David sought to honor the locus of God's presence among his people, so too can we seek to honor Mary, who bore God in an even more intimate way for us.

David brings the ark to Jerusalem with the intention of housing it in a glorious temple. While David does not get to build the temple, he still makes plans for it and spares no expense in making the temple beautiful. He says to his son Solomon, who is to build the temple, "With great pains I have provided for the house of the LORD one hundred thousand talents of gold, one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond weighing, for there is so much of it; timber and stone too I have provided. To these you must add more" (1 Chron. 22:14). David's approach to the temple is something all of us can imitate in our lives today.

First, we can take note of David's generosity. One million talents, if the number is accurate, was an *enormous* sum in the ancient world. David is not merely giving from his excess but is putting all of the wealth of Israel to work for God's glory. We, too, ought to give as generously as David does, knowing that only by giving away God's gifts do we receive more.

Second, we can appreciate David's emphasis on beauty. David does not seek to build an ugly house for God but one that is supremely beautiful. How beautiful do we try to make our churches or the places of prayer in our homes? David understood that beauty was an important way to draw both Israelites and others toward God. This is no less true today.

Yet the question arises: If the temple was so important, why is there no physical temple in Jerusalem today? Jesus answers this question in John 4 by both affirming and going beyond what was found in 1 Chronicles. Jesus says that "salvation is from the Jews" and that the Jews "worship what we know" (John 4:22). These words are in line with 1 Chronicles' message

about the importance of proper worship in Jerusalem. However, Jesus adds that “the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem” (John 4:21) and that “the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth” (4:23). The Jerusalem temple really was God’s special dwelling place on earth for a time. However, God’s ultimate plan was not for worship to be given to him merely in Jerusalem by a small group of people but, through his Holy Spirit, to be given to him by all peoples worldwide.

How then do we, who are temples of God’s Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor. 6:19), prepare ourselves to be God’s dwelling? God lavishes gracious gifts worth more than David’s talents of gold and silver onto our souls. Do we follow David and use these to prepare a pure dwelling for God in our hearts to worship him in “spirit and truth,” or do we prepare for him an ugly dwelling?

In the end, while most of the many names listed in 1 Chronicles will be forgotten, those people find their ultimate descendant in later genealogies in Matthew and Luke. This descendant, Jesus, David’s son and yet his “LORD” (Ps. 110:1), came in a new Ark to show the people of Israel and the world a new way to worship God.

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O GIVE
THANKS
TO *the* LORD,
CALL ON
HIS NAME.

FROM ADAM TO ABRAHAM

1 Adam, Seth, Enosh; ² Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared; ³ Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech; ⁴ Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

⁵ The descendants of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. ⁶ The descendants of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Diphath, and Togarmah. ⁷ The descendants of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.

⁸ The descendants of Ham: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. ⁹ The descendants of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama, and Sabteca. The descendants of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. ¹⁰ Cush became the father of Nimrod; he was the first to be a mighty one on the earth.

¹¹ Egypt became the father of Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, ¹² Pathrusim, Casluhim, and Caphtorim, from whom the Philistines come.

¹³ Canaan became the father of Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, ¹⁴ and the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, ¹⁵ the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, ¹⁶ the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites.

¹⁷ The descendants of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech. ¹⁸ Arpachshad became the father of Shelah; and Shelah became the father of Eber. ¹⁹ To Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg (for in his days the earth was divided), and the name of his brother Joktan. ²⁰ Joktan became the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²¹ Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²² Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, ²³ Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab; all these were the descendants of Joktan.

²⁴ Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah; ²⁵ Eber, Peleg, Reu; ²⁶ Serug, Nahor, Terah; ²⁷ Abram, that is, Abraham.

Two Genealogies

1 Chronicles 1–10 | Bishop Barron

The first ten chapters of 1 Chronicles are essentially a list of the antecedents of King David, beginning with Adam himself and leading through hundreds of other figures and events to Saul and Jonathan and their tragic end on Mount Gilboa. What the chronicler is not so subtly

insinuating is that all of human history has in a very real sense been a preparation for David and his gathering of the tribes in Hebron and then in Jerusalem.

Similarly, the Gospel of Matthew begins with a lengthy genealogy conducting toward the new David. Matthew is indicating that the human story finds its truest fulfillment in Jesus.

FROM ABRAHAM TO JACOB

²⁸ The sons of Abraham: Isaac and Ishmael. ²⁹ These are their genealogies: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth; and Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ³⁰ Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, ³¹ Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael. ³² The sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bore Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. The sons of Jokshan: Sheba and Dedan. ³³ The sons of Midian: Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the descendants of Keturah.

³⁴ Abraham became the father of Isaac. The sons of Isaac: Esau and Israel. ³⁵ The sons of Esau: Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. ³⁶ The sons of Eliphaz: Teman, Omar, Zephi, Gatam, Kenaz, Timna, and Amalek. ³⁷ The sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

³⁸ The sons of Seir: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. ³⁹ The sons of Lotan: Hori and Homam; and Lotan's sister was Timna. ⁴⁰ The sons of Shobal: Alian, Manahath, Ebal, Shephi, and Onam. The sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah. ⁴¹ The sons of Anah: Dishon. The sons of Dishon: Hamran, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. ⁴² The sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Jaakan. The sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

⁴³ These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the Israelites: Bela son of Beor, whose city was called Dinhabah. ⁴⁴ When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah of Bozrah succeeded him. ⁴⁵ When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites succeeded him. ⁴⁶ When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, succeeded him; and the name of his city was Avith. ⁴⁷ When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah succeeded him. ⁴⁸ When Samlah died, Shaul of Rehoboth on the Euphrates succeeded him. ⁴⁹ When Shaul died, Baal-hanan son of Achbor succeeded him. ⁵⁰ When Baal-hanan died, Hadad succeeded him; the name of his city was Pai, and his wife's name Mehetabel daughter of Matred, daughter of Me-zahab. ⁵¹ And Hadad died.

The clans of Edom were: clans Timna, Aliah, Jetheth, ⁵² Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, ⁵³ Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, ⁵⁴ Magdiel, and Iram; these are the clans of Edom.

THE SONS OF ISRAEL AND THE DESCENDANTS OF JUDAH

2 These are the sons of Israel: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, ² Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. ³ The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, and Shelah; these three the Canaanite woman Bath-shua bore to him. Now Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death. ⁴ His daughter-in-law Tamar also bore him Perez and Zerah. Judah had five sons in all.

The Twelve Tribes of Israel

1 Chronicles 2:1–2 | Bishop Barron

The opening of this chapter details the twelve sons of Jacob, later known as Israel. Leah bore Jacob six sons and a daughter, one of Leah's maids bore him two more, one of Rachel's maids another two, and finally Rachel herself gave birth to two sons, Joseph and Benjamin. What Jacob originally wanted was marriage and children with Rachel, and he was compelled to wait and work fourteen years to achieve the marriage and many more years to father the children (Gen. 29–31).

But the entire time, when the patriarch was almost certainly cursing his fate, God was accomplishing his own purpose, as it were, behind Jacob's back, eventually giving Jacob more than he could have

imagined. We find this theme of the non-competitive and non-interruptive quality of God's causality everywhere in the Bible. The one who is the Creator of all, the unconditioned existent, does not have to manipulate or work around the beings that he has created, even those creatures of his who have free will. Rather, divine and human agency can cooperate, each acting within its proper scope. The prophet Isaiah will express the notion with admirable understatement: "O LORD . . . all that we have done, you have done for us" (Isa. 26:12).

Though Jacob was undoubtedly frustrated and angry, his long apprenticeship and unexpected association with Leah, as well as his marriage to Rachel, will result in the sons that God wants as the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel.

⁵ The sons of Perez: Hezron and Hamul. ⁶ The sons of Zerah: Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara, five in all. ⁷ The sons of Carmi: Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the matter of the devoted thing; ⁸ and Ethan's son was Azariah.

⁹ The sons of Hezron, who were born to him: Jerahmeel, Ram, and Chelubai. ¹⁰ Ram became the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab became the father of Nahshon, prince of the sons of Judah. ¹¹ Nahshon became the father of Salma, Salma of Boaz, ¹² Boaz of Obed, Obed of Jesse. ¹³ Jesse became the father of Eliab his firstborn, Abinadab the second, Shimea the third, ¹⁴ Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, ¹⁵ Ozem the sixth, David the seventh, ¹⁶ and their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. The sons of Zeruiah: Abishai, Joab, and Asahel, three. ¹⁷ Abigail bore Amasa, and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmaelite.

¹⁸ Caleb son of Hezron had children by his wife Azubah, and by Jerioth; these were her sons: Jesher, Shobab, and Ardon. ¹⁹ When Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrath, who bore him Hur. ²⁰ Hur became the father of Uri, and Uri became the father of Bezalel.

²¹ Afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir father of Gilead, whom he married when he was sixty years old; and she bore him Segub; ²² and Segub became the father of Jair, who had twenty-three towns in the land of Gilead. ²³ But Geshur and Aram took from them Havvoth-jair, Kenath and its villages, sixty towns. All these were descendants of Machir, father of Gilead. ²⁴ After the death of Hezron, in Caleb-ephrahtah, Abijah wife of Hezron bore him Ashhur, father of Tekoa.

²⁵ The sons of Jerahmeel, the firstborn of Hezron: Ram his firstborn, Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. ²⁶ Jerahmeel also had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam. ²⁷ The sons of Ram, the firstborn of Jerahmeel: Maaz, Jamin, and Eker. ²⁸ The sons of Onam: Shammai and Jada. The sons of Shammai: Nadab and Abishur. ²⁹ The name of Abishur's wife was Abihail, and she bore him Ahban and Molid. ³⁰ The sons of Nadab: Seled and Appaim; and Seled died childless. ³¹ The son of Appaim: Ishi. The son of Ishi: Sheshan. The son of Sheshan: Ahlai. ³² The sons of Jada, Shammai's brother: Jether and Jonathan; and Jether died childless. ³³ The sons of Jonathan: Peleth and Zaza. These were the descendants of Jerahmeel. ³⁴ Now Sheshan had no sons, only daughters; but Sheshan had an Egyptian slave, whose name was Jarha. ³⁵ So Sheshan gave his daughter in marriage to his slave Jarha; and she bore him Attai. ³⁶ Attai became the father of Nathan, and Nathan of Zabad. ³⁷ Zabad became the father of Ephlal, and Ephlal of Obed. ³⁸ Obed became the father of Jehu, and Jehu of Azariah. ³⁹ Azariah became the father of Helez, and Helez of Eleasah. ⁴⁰ Eleasah became the father of Sismai, and Sismai of Shallum. ⁴¹ Shallum became the father of Jekamiah, and Jekamiah of Elishama.

⁴² The sons of Caleb brother of Jerahmeel: Mesha his firstborn, who was father of Ziph. The sons of Mareshah father of Hebron. ⁴³ The sons of Hebron: Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema. ⁴⁴ Shema became father of Raham, father of Jorkeam; and Rekem became the father of Shammai. ⁴⁵ The son of Shammai: Maon; and Maon was the father of Beth-zur. ⁴⁶ Ephah also, Caleb's concubine, bore Haran, Moza, and Gazez; and Haran became the father of Gazez. ⁴⁷ The sons of Jahdai: Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph. ⁴⁸ Maacah, Caleb's concubine, bore Sheber and Tirhanah. ⁴⁹ She also bore Shaaph father of Madmannah, Sheva father of Machbenah and

father of Gibeai; and the daughter of Caleb was Achsah.⁵⁰ These were the descendants of Caleb.

The sons of Hur the firstborn of Ephrathah: Shobai father of Kiriath-jearim,⁵¹ Salma father of Bethlehem, and Hareph father of Beth-gader.⁵² Shobai father of Kiriath-jearim had other sons: Haroeh, half of the Menuhoth.⁵³ And the families of Kiriath-jearim: the Ithrites, the Puthites, the Shumathites, and the Mishraites; from these came the Zorathites and the Eshtaulites.⁵⁴ The sons of Salma: Bethlehem, the Netophathites, Atroth-beth-joad, and half of the Manahathites, the Zorites.⁵⁵ The families also of the scribes that lived at Jabez: the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and the Sucathites. These are the Kenites who came from Hammath, father of the house of Rechab.

DESCENDANTS OF DAVID AND SOLOMON

3 These are the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: the firstborn Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelite; the second Daniel, by Abigail the Carmelite;² the third Absalom, son of Maacah, daughter of King Talmai of Geshur; the fourth Adonijah, son of Hagith;³ the fifth Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth Ithreah, by his wife Eglah;⁴ six were born to him in Hebron, where he reigned for seven years and six months. And he reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem.⁵ These were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon, four by Bath-shua, daughter of Ammiel;⁶ then Ibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet,⁷ Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia,⁸ Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet, nine.⁹ All these were David's sons, besides the sons of the concubines; and Tamar was their sister.

¹⁰ The descendants of Solomon: Rehoboam, Abijah his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son,¹¹ Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son,¹² Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son,¹³ Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son,¹⁴ Amon his son, Josiah his son.¹⁵ The sons of Josiah: Johanan the firstborn, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum.¹⁶ The descendants of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son;¹⁷ and the sons of Jeconiah, the captive: Shealtiel his son,¹⁸ Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah;¹⁹ The sons of Pedaiah: Zerubbabel and Shimei; and the sons of Zerubbabel: Meshullam and Hananiah, and Shelomith was their sister;²⁰ and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-hesed, five.²¹ The sons of Hananiah: Pelatiah and Jeshaiah, his son Rephaiah, his son Arnan, his son Obadiah, his son Shecaniah.²² The son of Shecaniah: Shemaiah. And the sons of Shemaiah: Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat, six.²³ The sons of Neariah: Eliezer, Hizkiah, and Azrikam, three.

From David to Christ

1 Chronicles 3 | Bishop Barron

A key figure in the genealogy of 1 Chronicles, as in the genealogy of Matthew's Gospel, is King David. It could be argued that David was the greatest figure in the Old Testament. He was the slayer of Goliath, the king who united Israel and formed her into a great power, a man of intense prayer and piety, a composer of Psalms, and an incomparable warrior. But he was also a murderer and an adulterer. Read the devastating account of David's seduction of Bathsheba from the second book of Samuel (2 Sam. 11–12) to get the details.

I'm sure that there are some reading these words who feel a bit like David.

Perhaps you're a person of great success, power, and influence who harbors a secret sin. Perhaps you've abused your power in order to freeze out someone who was threatening you or to demean someone whom you envied. Maybe you've done worse. Well, the Messiah came forth from David and was pleased to be a relative of that deeply ambiguous character.

The good news is that God himself pushed into the dysfunctional and ambiguous family of man. And he continues to join us, even though we, like so many of his Israelite ancestors, are unworthy of him. Like them, we are awed, compromised, half-finished. But he becomes our brother anyway. That's the amazing grace of the Incarnation.

²⁴ The sons of Eliezer: Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pedaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani, seven.

DESCENDANTS OF JUDAH

4 The sons of Judah: Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobai.² Reaiah son of Shobai became the father of Jahath, and Jahath became the father of Ahumai and Lahad. These were the families of the Zorathites.³ These were the sons of Etam: Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash; and the name of their sister was Hazzelelponi,⁴ and Penuel was the father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah. These were the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah, the father of Bethlehem.⁵ Ashhur father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah;⁶ Naarah bore him Ahuzzam, Hopher, Temeni, and Haahashtari. These were the sons of Naarah.⁷ The sons of Helah: Zereth, Izhar, and Ethnan.⁸ Koz became the father of Anub, Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel son of Harum.⁹ Jabez was honored more than his brothers; and his mother named him Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain."

¹⁰ Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, “Oh that you would bless me and enlarge my border, and that your hand might be with me, and that you would keep me from hurt and harm!” And God granted what he asked.

¹¹ Chelub the brother of Shuhah became the father of Mehir, who was the father of Eshton. ¹² Eshton became the father of Beth-rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of Ir-nahash. These are the men of Recah. ¹³ The sons of Kenaz: Othniel and Seraiah; and the sons of Othniel: Hathath and Meonothai. ¹⁴ Meonothai became the father of Ophrah; and Seraiah became the father of Joab father of Ge-harashim, so-called because they were artisans. ¹⁵ The sons of Caleb son of Jephunneh: Iru, Elah, and Naam; and the son of Elah: Kenaz. ¹⁶ The sons of Jehallelel: Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel. ¹⁷ The sons of Ezra: Jether, Mered, Ephraim, and Jalon. These are the sons of Bithiah, daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered married; and she conceived and bore Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah father of Eshtemoa. ¹⁸ And his Judean wife bore Jered father of Gedor, Heber father of Soco, and Jekuthiel father of Zanoah. ¹⁹ The sons of the wife of Hodiah, the sister of Naham, were the fathers of Keilah the Garmite and Eshtemoa the Maacathite. ²⁰ The sons of Shimon: Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon. The sons of Ishi: Zoheth and Ben-zoheth. ²¹ The sons of Shelah son of Judah: Er father of Lecah, Laadah father of Mareshah, and the families of the guild of linen workers at Beth-ashbea; ²² and Jokim, and the men of Cozeba, and Joash, and Saraph, who married into Moab but returned to Lehem (now the records are ancient). ²³ These were the potters and inhabitants of Netaim and Gederah; they lived there with the king in his service.

DESCENDANTS OF SIMEON

²⁴ The sons of Simeon: Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, Shaul; ²⁵ Shallum was his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son. ²⁶ The sons of Mishma: Hammuel his son, Zaccur his son, Shimei his son. ²⁷ Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brothers did not have many children, nor did all their family multiply like the Judeans. ²⁸ They lived in Beer-sheba, Moladah, Hazar-shual, ²⁹ Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, ³⁰ Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, ³¹ Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susim, Beth-biri, and Shaaraim. These were their towns until David became king. ³² And their villages were Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen, and Ashan, five towns, ³³ along with all their villages that were around these towns as far as Baal. These were their settlements. And they kept a genealogical record.

³⁴ Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah son of Amaziah, ³⁵ Joel, Jehu son of Joshiah son of Seraiah son of Asiel, ³⁶ Eliezer, Jaakobah, Jeshohai, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, ³⁷ Ziza son of Shiphi son of Allon son of Jedaiah

son of Shimri son of Shemaiah— ³⁸ these mentioned by name were leaders in their families, and their clans increased greatly. ³⁹ They journeyed to the entrance of Gedor, to the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks, ⁴⁰ where they found rich, good pasture, and the land was very broad, quiet, and peaceful; for the former inhabitants there belonged to Ham. ⁴¹ These, registered by name, came in the days of King Hezekiah of Judah, and attacked their tents and the Meunim who were found there, and exterminated them to this day, and settled in their place, because there was pasture there for their flocks. ⁴² And some of them, five hundred men of the Simeonites, went to Mount Seir, having as their leaders Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel, sons of Ishi; ⁴³ they destroyed the remnant of the Amalekites that had escaped, and they have lived there to this day.

DESCENDANTS OF REUBEN

5 The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel. (He was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel, so that he is not enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright; ² though Judah became prominent among his brothers and a ruler came from him, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph.) ³ The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel: Hanoah, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. ⁴ The sons of Joel: Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, ⁵ Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, ⁶ Beerah his son, whom King Tilgath-pilneser of Assyria carried away into exile; he was a chieftain of the Reubenites. ⁷ And his kindred by their families, when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned: the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah, ⁸ and Bela son of Azaz, son of Shema, son of Joel, who lived in Aroer, as far as Nebo and Baal-meon. ⁹ He also lived to the east as far as the beginning of the desert this side of the Euphrates, because their cattle had multiplied in the land of Gilead. ¹⁰ And in the days of Saul they made war on the Hagarites, who fell by their hand; and they lived in their tents throughout all the region east of Gilead.

DESCENDANTS OF GAD

¹¹ The sons of Gad lived beside them in the land of Bashan as far as Salecah: ¹² Joel the chief, Shapham the second, Janai, and Shaphat in Bashan. ¹³ And their kindred according to their clans: Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, and Eber, seven. ¹⁴ These were the sons of Abihail son of Huri, son of Jaroah, son of Gilead, son of Michael, son of Jeshishai, son of Jahdo, son of Buz; ¹⁵ Ahi son of Abdiel, son of Guni, was chief in their clan; ¹⁶ and they lived in Gilead, in Bashan and in its towns, and in all the pasture lands of Sharon to their limits. ¹⁷ All of these were enrolled by genealogies in the days of King Jotham of Judah, and in the days of King Jeroboam of Israel.



1 Chronicles 6:31–46

VARIOUS BUILDERS | Fifteenth century (with subsequent additions and restorations)

The Organ of Amiens Cathedral

Essay by Michael Stevens

The first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles give a detailed genealogy of Adam to Jacob, of each of Jacob's sons, and of Saul, David, and Solomon. In chapter 6, the author lists the names of those whom David appointed to "minister with song" before the ark—Hebrew liturgical musicians whose worship is described as both a service and ministry. Throughout the centuries, the Magisterium has continued to emphasize the importance of music within the life of the Church, affirming that "liturgical worship is given a more noble form" when it is celebrated in song (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 113).

In the West, the pipe organ has traditionally served as the primary accompaniment for liturgical song and has been uniquely praised by the Church: it "powerfully lifts up man's mind to God and to higher things" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 120). Nowhere is this overwhelmingly uplifting character of the pipe organ more perceptible than in the context of the French Gothic style, epitomized by structures such as Amiens Cathedral. In this magnificent building, every conceivable element propels the attention of the congregation upward. This is especially clear in the ascending motion of the stone vaulting, whose rhythm is harmoniously echoed by the parallel pipework of the organ. Furthermore, this upward-striving momentum seen across the church's visual design can also be heard. The sound of the organ and singers emanates from the remote heights of the choir loft as if from heaven. From their elevated perch, the liturgical musicians invite the faithful to lift their hearts still further up, that they might proclaim in unison with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will" (see Luke 2:14).

Voicing an organ

Organ building is a uniquely demanding form of instrument making. In addition to constructing the instrument, the builder must also voice it. Through this painstaking process, the builder adjusts the sonic output of each and every pipe (of which there are over 2,500 at Amiens) according to the acoustic properties of the room. By listening carefully to the balance of sound as it echoes in space, the organ builder transforms the church into an enormous instrument.



¹⁸ The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh had valiant warriors, who carried shield and sword, and drew the bow, expert in war, forty-four thousand seven hundred sixty, ready for service. ¹⁹ They made war on the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab; ²⁰ and when they received help against them, the Hagrites and all who were with them were given into their hands, for they cried to God in the battle, and he granted their entreaty because they trusted in him. ²¹ They captured their livestock: fifty thousand of their camels, two hundred fifty thousand sheep, two thousand donkeys, and one hundred thousand captives. ²² Many fell slain, because the war was of God. And they lived in their territory until the exile.

THE HALF-TRIBE OF MANASSEH

²³ The members of the half-tribe of Manasseh lived in the land; they were very numerous from Bashan to Baal-hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon. ²⁴ These were the heads of their clans: Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel, mighty warriors, famous men, heads of their clans. ²⁵ But they transgressed against the God of their ancestors, and prostituted themselves to the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. ²⁶ So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of King Pul of Assyria, the spirit of King Tilgath-pileser of Assyria, and he carried them away, namely, the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river Gozan, to this day.

DESCENDANTS OF LEVI

6 The sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath, and Merari. ² The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. ³ The children of Amram: Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. The sons of Aaron: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ⁴ Eleazar became the father of Phinehas, Phinehas of Abishua, ⁵ Abishua of Bukki, Bukki of Uzzi, ⁶ Uzzi of Zerachiah, Zerachiah of Meraioth, ⁷ Meraioth of Amariah, Amariah of Ahitub, ⁸ Ahitub of Zadok, Zadok of Ahimaaz, ⁹ Ahimaaz of Azariah, Azariah of Johanan, ¹⁰ and Johanan of Azariah (it was he who served as priest in the house that Solomon built in Jerusalem). ¹¹ Azariah became the father of Amariah, Amariah of Ahitub, ¹² Ahitub of Zadok, Zadok of Shallum, ¹³ Shallum of Hilkiah, Hilkiah of Azariah, ¹⁴ Azariah of Seraiah, Seraiah of Jehozadak; ¹⁵ and Jehozadak went into exile when the LORD sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

¹⁶ The sons of Levi: Gershom, Kohath, and Merari. ¹⁷ These are the names of the sons of Gershom: Libni and Shimei. ¹⁸ The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. ¹⁹ The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the clans of the Levites according to their ancestry. ²⁰ Of Gershom: Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimmah his son, ²¹ Joah his son, Iddo his son,

Zerah his son, Jeatherai his son. ²² The sons of Kohath: Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son, ²³ Elkanah his son, Ebiasaph his son, Assir his son, ²⁴ Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziab his son, and Shaul his son. ²⁵ The sons of Elkanah: Amasai and Ahimoth, ²⁶ Elkanah his son, Zophai his son, Nahath his son, ²⁷ Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son. ²⁸ The sons of Samuel: Joel his firstborn, the second Abijah. ²⁹ The sons of Merari: Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzziab his son, ³⁰ Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, and Asaiah his son.

MUSICIANS APPOINTED BY DAVID

³¹ These are the men whom David put in charge of the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the ark came to rest there. ³² They ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem; and they performed their service in due order. ³³ These are the men who served; and their sons were:

Joseph Ratzinger
(Pope Benedict XVI)
(1927–2022)

*The Spirit of
the Liturgy*



They Ministered with Song

1 Chronicles 6:31–32

The importance of music in biblical religion is shown very simply by the fact that the verb “to sing” (with related words such as “song,” and so forth) is one of the most commonly used words in the Bible. It occurs 309 times in the Old Testament and 36 in the New.

When man comes into contact with God, mere speech is not enough. Areas of his existence are awakened that spontaneously turn into song. Indeed, man’s own being is insufficient for what he has to express, and so he invites the whole of creation to become a song with him: “Awake, my soul! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn. I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. For your steadfast love is as high as the heavens; your faithfulness extends to the clouds” (Ps. 57:8–10).

The Sweet Singer of Israel

1 Chronicles 6:31–32 | Bishop Barron

In the middle of 1 Chronicles 6, we hear of “the men whom David put in charge of the service of song in the house of the Lord, after the ark came to rest there.”

It is most significant that David’s first real entry into the story of Israel is as a musician. Saul, we are told, troubled by an evil spirit, asks that someone skilled at playing the lyre should be brought to soothe the king. A courtier remarks that he knows a son of Jesse who is not only a gifted musician but also a man of valor and prudent in speech. So Saul brings David into his court and soon comes to love him.

Though David will undoubtedly prove himself to be a great warrior and man of affairs, he first appears as a singer and player of music, and this aesthetic, “sweet singer” quality will be ingredient in his manner of leadership. Before he engages Goliath, he utters a stirring poetic challenge; upon the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, he speaks an

achingly beautiful lament; and of course, he comes to be associated with the most lyrical book of the Bible, the Psalms.

So many of the truly effective political leaders—Lincoln, Churchill, Napoleon—governed as much by pathos as by force of arms or legislative maneuvering, and this was certainly true of David. Not to be overlooked, of course, is the fact that God’s power is expressed by means of his word in the creation of the world. God speaks and things come into being, which signals that God’s word is not so much derivative and descriptive as antecedent and creative. So the leader who is filled with the Spirit and who wields the divine word will make things happen. We will remark that when David attends to God’s word, he succeeds, even in his military and political endeavors. And when the definitive son of David appears, he will effect change through the power of his word: “Little girl, get up!” “Lazarus, come out!” “Son, your sins are forgiven”; “This is my blood of the covenant” (see Mark 5:41, John 11:43, Mark 2:5, Matt. 26:28).

Of the Kohathites: Heman, the singer, son of Joel, son of Samuel,³⁴ son of Elkanah, son of Jeroham, son of Eliel, son of Toah,³⁵ son of Zuph, son of Elkanah, son of Mahath, son of Amasai,³⁶ son of Elkanah, son of Joel, son of Azariah, son of Zephaniah,³⁷ son of Tahath, son of Assir, son of Ebiasaph, son of Korah,³⁸ son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, son of Israel;³⁹ and his brother Asaph, who stood on his right, namely, Asaph son of Berechiah,

son of Shimea,⁴⁰ son of Michael, son of Baaseiah, son of Malchijah,⁴¹ son of Ethni, son of Zerah, son of Adaiah,⁴² son of Ethan, son of Zimmah, son of Shimei,⁴³ son of Jahath, son of Gershon, son of Levi.⁴⁴ On the left were their kindred the sons of Merari: Ethan son of Kishi, son of Abdi, son of Malluch,⁴⁵ son of Hashabiah, son of Amaziah, son of Hilkiah,⁴⁶ son of Amzi, son of Bani, son of Shemer,⁴⁷ son of Mahli, son of Mushi, son of Merari, son of Levi;⁴⁸ and their kindred the Levites were appointed for all the service of the tabernacle of the house of God.

⁴⁹ But Aaron and his sons made offerings on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense, doing all the work of the most holy place, to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.⁵⁰ These are the sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son,⁵¹ Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son,⁵² Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son,⁵³ Zadok his son, Ahimaaz his son.

SETTLEMENTS OF THE LEVITES

⁵⁴ These are their dwelling places according to their settlements within their borders: to the sons of Aaron of the families of Kohathites—for the lot fell to them first—⁵⁵ to them they gave Hebron in the land of Judah and its surrounding pasture lands,⁵⁶ but the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb son of Jephunneh.⁵⁷ To the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of refuge: Hebron, Libnah with its pasture lands, Jattir, Eshtemoa with its pasture lands,⁵⁸ Hilen with its pasture lands, Debir with its pasture lands,⁵⁹ Ashan with its pasture lands, and Beth-shemesh with its pasture lands.⁶⁰ From the tribe of Benjamin, Geba with its pasture lands, Alemeth with its pasture lands, and Anathoth with its pasture lands. All their towns throughout their families were thirteen.

⁶¹ To the rest of the Kohathites were given by lot out of the family of the tribe, out of the half-tribe, the half of Manasseh, ten towns.⁶² To the Gershomites according to their families were allotted thirteen towns out of the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Manasseh in Bashan.⁶³ To the Merarites according to their families were allotted twelve towns out of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.⁶⁴ So the people of Israel gave the Levites the towns with their pasture lands.⁶⁵ They also gave them by lot out of the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin these towns that are mentioned by name.

⁶⁶ And some of the families of the sons of Kohath had towns of their territory out of the tribe of Ephraim.⁶⁷ They were given the cities of refuge: Shechem with its pasture lands in the hill country of Ephraim,

Gezer with its pasture lands,⁶⁸ Jokmeam with its pasture lands, Beth-horon with its pasture lands,⁶⁹ Aijalon with its pasture lands, Gath-rimmon with its pasture lands;⁷⁰ and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Aner with its pasture lands, and Bileam with its pasture lands, for the rest of the families of the Kohathites.

⁷¹ To the Gershomites: out of the half-tribe of Manasseh: Golan in Bashan with its pasture lands and Ashtaroth with its pasture lands;⁷² and out of the tribe of Issachar: Kedesh with its pasture lands, Daberath with its pasture lands,⁷³ Ramoth with its pasture lands, and Anem with its pasture lands;⁷⁴ out of the tribe of Asher: Mashal with its pasture lands, Abdon with its pasture lands,⁷⁵ Hukok with its pasture lands, and Rehob with its pasture lands;⁷⁶ and out of the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee with its pasture lands, Hammon with its pasture lands, and Kiria-thaim with its pasture lands.⁷⁷ To the rest of the Merarites out of the tribe of Zebulun: Rimmono with its pasture lands, Tabor with its pasture lands,⁷⁸ and across the Jordan from Jericho, on the east side of the Jordan, out of the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the steppe with its pasture lands, Jahzah with its pasture lands,⁷⁹ Kedemoth with its pasture lands, and Mephaath with its pasture lands;⁸⁰ and out of the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead with its pasture lands, Mahanaim with its pasture lands,⁸¹ Heshbon with its pasture lands, and Jazer with its pasture lands.

DESCENDANTS OF ISSACHAR

7 The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron, four.² The sons of Tola: Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their ancestral houses, namely of Tola, mighty warriors of their generations, their number in the days of David being twenty-two thousand six hundred.³ The son of Uzzi: Izrahiah. And the sons of Izrahiah: Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Isshiah, five, all of them chiefs;⁴ and along with them, by their generations, according to their ancestral houses, were units of the fighting force, thirty-six thousand, for they had many wives and sons.⁵ Their kindred belonging to all the families of Issachar were in all eighty-seven thousand mighty warriors, enrolled by genealogy.

DESCENDANTS OF BENJAMIN

⁶ The sons of Benjamin: Bela, Becher, and Jediah, three.⁷ The sons of Bela: Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri, five, heads of ancestral houses, mighty warriors; and their enrollment by genealogies was twenty-two thousand thirty-four.⁸ The sons of Becher: Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elieonai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. All these were the sons of Becher;⁹ and their enrollment by genealogies, according to their generations, as

heads of their ancestral houses, mighty warriors, was twenty thousand two hundred.¹⁰ The sons of Jediah: Bilhan. And the sons of Bilhan: Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish, and Ahishahar.¹¹ All these were the sons of Jediah according to the heads of their ancestral houses, mighty warriors, seventeen thousand two hundred, ready for service in war.¹² And Shuppim and Huppm were the sons of Ir, Hushim the son of Aher.

DESCENDANTS OF NAPHTALI

¹³ The descendants of Naphtali: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum, the descendants of Bilhah.

DESCENDANTS OF MANASSEH

¹⁴ The sons of Manasseh: Asriel, whom his Aramean concubine bore; she bore Machir the father of Gilead.¹⁵ And Machir took a wife for Huppm and for Shuppim. The name of his sister was Maacah. And the name of the second was Zelophehad; and Zelophehad had daughters.¹⁶ Maacah the wife of Machir bore a son, and she named him Peresh; the name of his brother was Sheresh; and his sons were Ulam and Rekem.¹⁷ The son of Ulam: Bedan. These were the sons of Gilead son of Machir, son of Manasseh.¹⁸ And his sister Hammolecheth bore Ishhod, Abiezer, and Mahlah.¹⁹ The sons of Shemida were Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

DESCENDANTS OF EPHRAIM

²⁰ The sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, and Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eleadah his son, Tahath his son,²¹ Zabad his son, Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead. Now the people of Gath, who were born in the land, killed them, because they came down to raid their cattle.²² And their father Ephraim mourned many days, and his brothers came to comfort him.²³ Ephraim went in to his wife, and she conceived and bore a son; and he named him Beriah, because disaster had befallen his house.²⁴ His daughter was Sheerah, who built both Lower and Upper Beth-horon, and Uzzen-sheerah.²⁵ Rephah was his son, Resheph his son, Telah his son, Tahan his son,²⁶ Ladan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son,²⁷ Nun his son, Joshua his son.²⁸ Their possessions and settlements were Bethel and its towns, and eastward Naaran, and westward Gezer and its towns, Shechem and its towns, as far as Ayyah and its towns;²⁹ also along the borders of the Manassites, Beth-shean and its towns, Taanach and its towns, Megiddo and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these lived the sons of Joseph son of Israel.

DESCENDANTS OF ASHER

³⁰ The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah.³¹ The sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel, who was the father of Birzaith.

³² Heber became the father of Japhlet, Shomer, Hotham, and their sister Shua. ³³ The sons of Japhlet: Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These are the sons of Japhlet. ³⁴ The sons of Shemer: Ahi, Rohgah, Hubbah, and Aram. ³⁵ The sons of Helem his brother: Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal. ³⁶ The sons of Zophah: Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah, ³⁷ Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran, and Beera. ³⁸ The sons of Jether: Jephunneh, Pispah, and Ara. ³⁹ The sons of Ulla: Arah, Hanniel, and Rizia. ⁴⁰ All of these were men of Asher, heads of ancestral houses, select mighty warriors, chief of the princes. Their number enrolled by genealogies, for service in war, was twenty-six thousand men.

DESCENDANTS OF BENJAMIN

8 Benjamin became the father of Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, Aharah the third, ² Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth. ³ And Bela had sons: Addar, Gera, Abihud, ⁴ Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, ⁵ Gera, Shephuphan, and Hiram. ⁶ These are the sons of Ehud (they were heads of ancestral houses of the inhabitants of Geba, and they were carried into exile to Manahath): ⁷ Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera, that is, Heglam, who became the father of Uzza and Ahihud. ⁸ And Shaharaim had sons in the country of Moab after he had sent away his wives Hushim and Baara. ⁹ He had sons by his wife Hodesh: Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, ¹⁰ Jeuz, Sachia, and Mirmah. These were his sons, heads of ancestral houses. ¹¹ He also had sons by Hushim: Abitub and Elpaal. ¹² The sons of Elpaal: Eber, Misham, and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod with its towns, ¹³ and Beriah and Shema (they were heads of ancestral houses of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who put to flight the inhabitants of Gath); ¹⁴ and Ahio, Shashak, and Jeremoth. ¹⁵ Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, ¹⁶ Michael, Ishpah, and Joha were sons of Beriah. ¹⁷ Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, ¹⁸ Ishmerai, Izliah, and Jobab were the sons of Elpaal. ¹⁹ Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi, ²⁰ Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, ²¹ Adaiah, Beraiah, and Shimrath were the sons of Shimei. ²² Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, ²³ Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, ²⁴ Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah, ²⁵ Iphdeiah, and Penuel were the sons of Shashak. ²⁶ Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, ²⁷ Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zichri were the sons of Jeroham. ²⁸ These were the heads of ancestral houses, according to their generations, chiefs. These lived in Jerusalem.

²⁹ Jeiel the father of Gibeon lived in Gibeon, and the name of his wife was Maacah. ³⁰ His firstborn son: Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab, ³¹ Gedor, Ahio, Zecher, ³² and Mikloth, who became the father of Shimeah. Now these also lived opposite their kindred in Jerusalem, with their kindred. ³³ Ner became the father of Kish, Kish of Saul, Saul of Jonathan, Malchishua,

Abinadab, and Esh-baal; ³⁴ and the son of Jonathan was Merib-baal; and Merib-baal became the father of Micah. ³⁵ The sons of Micah: Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz. ³⁶ Ahaz became the father of Jehoaddah; and Jehoaddah became the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri; Zimri became the father of Moza. ³⁷ Moza became the father of Binea; Raphah was his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. ³⁸ Azel had six sons, and these are their names: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan; all these were the sons of Azel. ³⁹ The sons of his brother Eshek: Ulam his firstborn, Jeush the second, and Eliphelet the third. ⁴⁰ The sons of Ulam were mighty warriors, archers, having many children and grandchildren, one hundred fifty. All these were Benjaminites.

9 So all Israel was enrolled by genealogies; and these are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel. And Judah was taken into exile in Babylon because of their unfaithfulness. ² Now the first to live again in their possessions in their towns were Israelites, priests, Levites, and temple servants.

INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM AFTER THE EXILE

³ And some of the people of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh lived in Jerusalem: ⁴ Uthai son of Ammihud, son of Omri, son of Imri, son of Bani, from the sons of Perez son of Judah. ⁵ And of the Shilonites: Asaiah the firstborn, and his sons. ⁶ Of the sons of Zerach: Jeuel and their kin, six hundred ninety. ⁷ Of the Benjaminites: Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Hodaviah, son of Hassenuah, ⁸ Ibneiah son of Jeroham, Elah son of Uzzi, son of Michri, and Meshullam son of Shephatiah, son of Reuel, son of Ibniyah; ⁹ and their kindred according to their generations, nine hundred fifty-six. All these were heads of families according to their ancestral houses.

PRIESTLY FAMILIES

¹⁰ Of the priests: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jachin, ¹¹ and Azariah son of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, the chief officer of the house of God; ¹² and Adaiah son of Jeroham, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah, and Maasai son of Adiel, son of Jahzerah, son of Meshullam, son of Meshillemith, son of Immer; ¹³ besides their kindred, heads of their ancestral houses, one thousand seven hundred sixty, qualified for the work of the service of the house of God.

LEVITICAL FAMILIES

¹⁴ Of the Levites: Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; ¹⁵ and Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattaniah son of Mica, son of Zichri, son of Asaph; ¹⁶ and Obadiah son of Shemaiah, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun, and Berechiah son of Asa, son of Elkanah, who lived in the villages of the Netophathites.

¹⁷ The gatekeepers were: Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman; and their kindred Shallum was the chief, ¹⁸ stationed previously in the king's gate on the east side. These were the gatekeepers of the camp of the Levites. ¹⁹ Shallum son of Kore, son of Ebiasaph, son of Korah, and his kindred of his ancestral house, the Korahites, were in charge of the work of the service, guardians of the thresholds of the tent, as their ancestors had been in charge of the camp of the LORD, guardians of the entrance. ²⁰ And Phinehas son of Eleazar was chief over them in former times; the LORD was with him. ²¹ Zechariah son of Meshelemiah was gatekeeper at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ²² All these, who were chosen as gatekeepers at the thresholds, were two hundred twelve. They were enrolled by genealogies in their villages. David and the seer Samuel established them in their office of trust. ²³ So they and their descendants were in charge of the gates of the house of the LORD, that is, the house of the tent, as guards. ²⁴ The gatekeepers were on the four sides, east, west, north, and south; ²⁵ and their kindred who were in their villages were obliged to come in every seven days, in turn, to be with them; ²⁶ for the four chief gatekeepers, who were Levites, were in charge of the chambers and the treasures of the house of God. ²⁷ And they would spend the night near the house of God; for on them lay the duty of watching, and they had charge of opening it every morning.

²⁸ Some of them had charge of the utensils of service, for they were required to count them when they were brought in and taken out. ²⁹ Others of them were appointed over the furniture, and over all the holy utensils, also over the choice flour, the wine, the oil, the incense, and the spices. ³⁰ Others, of the sons of the priests, prepared the mixing of the spices, ³¹ and Mattithiah, one of the Levites, the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, was in charge of making the flat cakes. ³² Also some of their kindred of the Kohathites had charge of the rows of bread, to prepare them for each sabbath.

³³ Now these are the singers, the heads of ancestral houses of the Levites, living in the chambers of the temple free from other service, for they were on duty day and night. ³⁴ These were heads of ancestral houses of the Levites, according to their generations; these leaders lived in Jerusalem.

THE FAMILY OF KING SAUL

³⁵ In Gibeon lived the father of Gibeon, Jeiel, and the name of his wife was Maacah. ³⁶ His firstborn son was Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, ³⁷ Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth; ³⁸ and Mikloth became the father of Shimeam; and these also lived opposite their kindred in Jerusalem,

with their kindred. ³⁹ Ner became the father of Kish, Kish of Saul, Saul of Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Esh-baal; ⁴⁰ and the son of Jonathan was Merib-baal; and Merib-baal became the father of Micah. ⁴¹ The sons of Micah: Pithon, Melech, Tahrea, and Ahaz; ⁴² and Ahaz became the father of Jarah, and Jarah of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri became the father of Moza. ⁴³ Moza became the father of Binea; and Rephaiah was his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son. ⁴⁴ Azel had six sons, and these are their names: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan; these were the sons of Azel.

DEATH OF SAUL AND HIS SONS

10 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. ² The Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchishua, sons of Saul. ³ The battle pressed hard on Saul; and the archers found him, and he was wounded by the archers. ⁴ Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, so that these uncircumcised may not come and make sport of me." But his armor-bearer was unwilling, for he was terrified. So Saul took his own sword and fell on it. ⁵ When his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died. ⁶ Thus Saul died; he and his three sons and all his house died together. ⁷ When all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that the army had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their towns and fled; and the Philistines came and occupied them.

⁸ The next day when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. ⁹ They stripped him and took his head and his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to carry the good news to their idols and to the people. ¹⁰ They put his armor in the temple of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon. ¹¹ But when all Jabesh-gilead heard everything that the Philistines had done to Saul, ¹² all the valiant warriors got up and took away the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh. Then they buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

¹³ So Saul died for his unfaithfulness; he was unfaithful to the LORD in that he did not keep the command of the LORD; moreover, he had consulted a medium, seeking guidance, ¹⁴ and did not seek guidance from the LORD. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

DAVID ANOINTED KING OF ALL ISRAEL

11 Then all Israel gathered together to David at Hebron and said, “See, we are your bone and flesh. ² For some time now, even while Saul was king, it was you who commanded the army of Israel. The LORD your God said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over my people Israel.” ³ So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel.

The Love That Unites the World

1 Chronicles 11:1 | Bishop Barron

David was in the midst of a long civil war with the descendants of King Saul, and he had attracted to himself a number of outsiders and outliers.

In the course of seven years, he consolidates his power in the south, but then, finally, representatives from the northern tribes come to him at Hebron, a city in the southern section of ancient Israel where David had set up a stronghold, and announce that they are willing to place themselves under his lordship: “See, we are your bone and flesh.” With that, David becomes the unifying force for the entire nation.

This is a key aspect of Christ’s kingship. He unites the tribes—not only the tribes of Israel but also the tribes of the world. We recall that his opening move when he commenced his public ministry was

to bring the tribes of Israel into unity. But then, in light of his Resurrection, it became clear that he was to be king of all the nations. Through Baptism, everyone, as Paul put it, is a member of Christ’s Mystical Body—bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh.

Johann Adam Möhler famously reflected on the necessity of a symbol of unity in any community. This is why a city needs a mayor and why a country needs a president and why the Church needs bishops and ultimately the pope. Well, Jesus is King of kings, the ultimate source of our unity.

And the force that draws together the whole world in unity is not the force of arms or of political authority; rather, it is the power of the divine love. The force that is great enough to transfer us from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light is not one of the elemental powers. It is the love of God, made visible on the cross of Jesus.

JERUSALEM CAPTURED

⁴ David and all Israel marched to Jerusalem, that is Jebus, where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land. ⁵ The inhabitants of Jebus said to David, “You will not come in here.” Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion, now the city of David. ⁶ David had said, “Whoever attacks the Jebusites first shall be chief and commander.” And Joab son of Zeruiah went up first, so he became chief. ⁷ David resided in the stronghold; therefore it was called the city of David. ⁸ He built the city all around, from the Millo in complete circuit; and Joab repaired the rest of the city. ⁹ And David became greater and greater, for the LORD of hosts was with him.

DAVID’S MIGHTY MEN AND THEIR EXPLOITS

¹⁰ Now these are the chiefs of David’s warriors, who gave him strong support in his kingdom, together with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel. ¹¹ This is an account of David’s mighty warriors: Jashobeam, son of Hachmoni, was chief of the Three; he wielded his spear against three hundred whom he killed at one time.

¹² And next to him among the three warriors was Eleazar son of Dodo, the Ahohite. ¹³ He was with David at Pas-dammim when the Philistines were gathered there for battle. There was a plot of ground full of barley. Now the people had fled from the Philistines, ¹⁴ but he and David took their stand in the middle of the plot, defended it, and killed the Philistines; and the LORD saved them by a great victory.

St. Thomas Aquinas
(1225–1274)

Summa theologiae



A Royal and Priestly City

1 Chronicles 11:4–9

[David chose] Jerusalem to set up his throne there, and to build there the temple of God, so that Jerusalem was at the same time a royal and a priestly city. Now, Christ’s priesthood and kingdom were consummated principally in his Passion. Therefore it was becoming that he should choose . . . Jerusalem for the scene of his Passion.



Travelers

In a charming touch, Church has added a band of travelers pausing to admire the view. Here, one cannot help but wonder if Church is drawing from memories of his own journey up the Mount of Olives. The presence of these figures both enhances the realism of the painting and emphasizes the enormous scale of the distant Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 11:4–9

FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH | 1870

Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives

Essay by Andrew Tolkmith

The eleventh chapter of 1 Chronicles details David's conquering of Jerusalem after being anointed king of Israel. Christ, who entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday hailed as a king, looked upon the City of David in the early hours of Good Friday from the nearby Mount of Olives, awaiting the hour when he would claim victory over sin through his death on the cross.

In this panoramic rendering by Frederic Edwin Church, Jerusalem is depicted from the perspective of the Mount of Olives, perhaps offering us a vantage point similar to the one that Jesus, the Son of David, had that morning. The piece, which measures over seven feet wide, was the fruit of extensive on-the-ground research and prayer by the artist. As part of his preparatory work, Church took multiple trips to the Holy Land to study the sacred sites, even going as far as camping with his wife on the summit of the Mount of Olives for a night, where they read about and meditated on Christ's agony in the garden.

Church's marvelous depiction of Jerusalem glistening in the sunlight after a storm is a testament to his intimate knowledge of his earthly subject, but it also beautifully suggests a premonition of the heavenly Jerusalem foretold in Revelation 21. There, the holy city is the Church, the Bride of the Lamb, safe from the storms of sin and error and radiant with the glory of God (Rev. 21:9–11).

¹⁵ Three of the thirty chiefs went down to the rock to David at the cave of Adullam, while the army of Philistines was encamped in the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁶ David was then in the stronghold; and the garrison of the Philistines was then at Bethlehem. ¹⁷ David said longingly, “O that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate!” ¹⁸ Then the Three broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and they brought it to David. But David would not drink of it; he poured it out to the LORD, ¹⁹ and said, “My God forbid that I should do this. Can I drink the blood of these men? For at the risk of their lives they brought it.” Therefore he would not drink it. The three warriors did these things.

²⁰ Now Abishai, the brother of Joab, was chief of the Thirty. With his spear he fought against three hundred and killed them, and won a name beside the Three. ²¹ He was the most renowned of the Thirty, and became their commander; but he did not attain to the Three.

²² Benaiah son of Jehoiada was a valiant man of Kabzeel, a doer of great deeds; he struck down two sons of Ariel of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion in a pit on a day when snow had fallen. ²³ And he killed an Egyptian, a man of great stature, five cubits tall. The Egyptian had in his hand a spear like a weaver’s beam; but Benaiah went against him with a staff, snatched the spear out of the Egyptian’s hand, and killed him with his own spear. ²⁴ Such were the things Benaiah son of Jehoiada did, and he won a name beside the three warriors. ²⁵ He was renowned among the Thirty, but he did not attain to the Three. And David put him in charge of his bodyguard.

²⁶ The warriors of the armies were Asahel brother of Joab, Elhanan son of Dodo of Bethlehem, ²⁷ Shammoth of Harod, Helez the Pelonite, ²⁸ Ira son of Ikkesh of Tekoa, Abiezer of Anathoth, ²⁹ Sibbecai the Hushathite, Ilai the Ahohite, ³⁰ Maharai of Netophah, Heled son of Baanah of Netophah, ³¹ Ithai son of Ribai of Gibeah of the Benjaminites, Benaiah of Pirathon, ³² Hurai of the wadis of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite, ³³ Azmaveth of Baharum, Eliahba of Shaalbun, ³⁴ Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan son of Shagee the Hararite, ³⁵ Ahiam son of Sachar the Hararite, Eliphal son of Ur, ³⁶ Hopher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, ³⁷ Hezro of Carmel, Naarai son of Ezbai, ³⁸ Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar son of Hagri, ³⁹ Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai of Beeroth, the armor-bearer of Joab son of Zeruiah, ⁴⁰ Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, ⁴¹ Uriah the Hittite, Zabad son of Ahlai, ⁴² Adina son of Shiza the Reubenite, a leader of the Reubenites, and thirty with him, ⁴³ Hanan son of Maacah, and Joshaphat the Mithnite, ⁴⁴ Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jeiel sons of Hotham the Aroerite, ⁴⁵ Jedaiel son

of Shimri, and his brother Joha the Tizite, ⁴⁶ Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai and Joshaviah sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite, ⁴⁷ Eliel, and Obed, and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

DAVID’S FOLLOWERS IN THE WILDERNESS

12 The following are those who came to David at Ziklag, while he could not move about freely because of Saul son of Kish; they were among the mighty warriors who helped him in war. ² They were archers, and could shoot arrows and sling stones with either the right hand or the left; they were Benjaminites, Saul’s kindred. ³ The chief was Ahiezer, then Joash, both sons of Shemaah of Gibeah; also Jeziel and Pelet sons of Azmaveth; Beracah, Jehu of Anathoth, ⁴ Ishmaiah of Gibeon, a warrior among the Thirty and a leader over the Thirty; Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, Jozabad of Gederah, ⁵ Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, Shephatiah the Haruphite; ⁶ Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korahites; ⁷ and Joelah and Zebadiah, sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

⁸ From the Gadites there went over to David at the stronghold in the wilderness mighty and experienced warriors, expert with shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and who were swift as gazelles on the mountains: ⁹ Ezer the chief, Obadiah second, Eliab third, ¹⁰ Mishmannah fourth, Jeremiah fifth, ¹¹ Attai sixth, Eliel seventh, ¹² Johanan eighth, Elzabad ninth, ¹³ Jeremiah tenth, Machbannai eleventh. ¹⁴ These Gadites were officers of the army, the least equal to a hundred and the greatest to a thousand. ¹⁵ These are the men who crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it was overflowing all its banks, and put to flight all those in the valleys, to the east and to the west.

¹⁶ Some Benjaminites and Judahites came to the stronghold to David. ¹⁷ David went out to meet them and said to them, “If you have come to me in friendship, to help me, then my heart will be knit to you; but if you have come to betray me to my adversaries, though my hands have done no wrong, then may the God of our ancestors see and give judgment.” ¹⁸ Then the spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the Thirty, and he said,

“We are yours, O David;
and with you, O son of Jesse!
Peace, peace to you,
and peace to the one who helps you!
For your God is the one who helps you.”

Then David received them, and made them officers of his troops.

¹⁹ Some of the Manassites deserted to David when he came with the Philistines for the battle against Saul. (Yet he did not help them, for the rulers of the Philistines took counsel and sent him away, saying, “He will desert to his master Saul at the cost of our heads.”) ²⁰ As he went to Ziklag these Manassites deserted to him: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai, chiefs of the thousands in Manasseh. ²¹ They helped David against the band of raiders, for they were all warriors and commanders in the army. ²² Indeed from day to day people kept coming to David to help him, until there was a great army, like an army of God.

DAVID’S ARMY AT HEBRON

²³ These are the numbers of the divisions of the armed troops who came to David in Hebron to turn the kingdom of Saul over to him, according to the word of the LORD. ²⁴ The people of Judah bearing shield and spear numbered six thousand eight hundred armed troops. ²⁵ Of the Simeonites, mighty warriors, seven thousand one hundred. ²⁶ Of the Levites four thousand six hundred. ²⁷ Jehoiada, leader of the house of Aaron, and with him three thousand seven hundred. ²⁸ Zadok, a young warrior, and twenty-two commanders from his own ancestral house. ²⁹ Of the Benjaminites, the kindred of Saul, three thousand, of whom the majority had continued to keep their allegiance to the house of Saul. ³⁰ Of the Ephraimites, twenty

thousand eight hundred, mighty warriors, notables in their ancestral houses. ³¹ Of the half-tribe of Manasseh, eighteen thousand, who were expressly named to come and make David king. ³² Of Issachar, those who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, two hundred chiefs, and all their kindred under their command. ³³ Of Zebulun, fifty thousand seasoned troops, equipped for battle with all the weapons of war, to help David with singleness of purpose. ³⁴ Of Naphtali, a thousand commanders, with whom there were thirty-seven thousand armed with shield and spear. ³⁵ Of the Danites, twenty-eight thousand six hundred equipped for battle. ³⁶ Of Asher, forty thousand seasoned troops ready for battle. ³⁷ Of the Reubenites and Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh from beyond the Jordan, one hundred twenty thousand armed with all the weapons of war.

³⁸ All these, warriors arrayed in battle order, came to Hebron with full intent to make David king over all Israel; likewise all the rest of Israel were of a single mind to make David king. ³⁹ They were there with David for three days, eating and drinking, for their kindred had provided for them. ⁴⁰ And also their neighbors, from as far away as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, came bringing food on donkeys, camels, mules, and oxen—abundant provisions of meal, cakes of figs, clusters of raisins, wine, oil, oxen, and sheep, for there was joy in Israel.

INDEED FROM DAY TO DAY
PEOPLE KEPT COMING TO
DAVID TO HELP HIM, UNTIL
THERE WAS A GREAT ARMY,
LIKE AN ARMY OF GOD.

St. Augustine
(354–430)

*Admonition and
Grace*



God Worked in Their Hearts

1 Chronicles 12:38

Scripture says: “All these, warriors arrayed in battle order, came to Hebron with full intent to make David king over all Israel.” Obviously, it was of their own will that these men made David king; the fact is clear and undeniable. Nevertheless, it was God, who effects in the hearts of men whatsoever he wills, who wrought this will in them. This is why Scripture first says: “And David became greater and greater, for the LORD of hosts was with him” (1 Chron. 11:9).



The Lord God, therefore, who was with David, brought these men to make him king. And how did he bring them to this? Surely it was not by binding them with any material chains. Rather, he worked within them; he seized their hearts; he drew them on by means of their own wills, which he had himself created within them.

THE ARK BROUGHT FROM KIRIATH-JEARIM

13 David consulted with the commanders of the thousands and of the hundreds, with every leader. ²David said to the whole assembly of Israel, “If it seems good to you, and if it is the will of the LORD our God, let us send abroad to our kindred who remain in all the land of Israel, including the priests and Levites in the cities that have pasture lands, that they may come together to us. ³Then let us bring again the ark of our God to us; for we did not turn to it in the days of Saul.” ⁴The whole assembly agreed to do so, for the thing pleased all the people.

LET US BRING
AGAIN *the* ARK of
OUR GOD TO US.

The Puzzle of Uzzah

1 Chronicles 13 | Bishop Barron

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER OF 1 CHRONICLES commences on a triumphant note: David assembles all Israel to bring the ark of the covenant back from Kiriath-jearim. The king chooses a veritable army of his best men in order to seize this apparently undefended piece of sacred furniture and bring it back to Jerusalem. One can see the enormous importance that David attaches to this mission. “Kiriath-jearim” is mentioned in the first book of Samuel (1 Sam. 6:19–7:2) and beautifully invoked in Psalm 132: “[David] swore to the LORD and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, ‘I will not enter my house or get into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the LORD.’ . . . We heard of it in Ephrathah; we found it in the fields of Jaar” (Ps. 132:2–6). This lyrical passage captures well the holy obsession of David to ground and center his liturgical empire through right praise.

We hear that David consults with the entire people before making this move and that they enthusiastically support him. Hence, we see the liturgical people gladly shaping themselves around the ark and the priest-king. The ark of the covenant, we are told, is in “the house of Abinadab,” an Israelite who presumably took it in when it was returned by the Philistines many years before, who were convinced that it bore a curse. Abinadab’s dwelling is said to be “on the hill” (1 Sam. 7:1; 2 Sam. 6:3), which probably carries the implication of a holy place or shrine of some kind. Of some interest is why, during the long years of Saul’s reign and the civil war, the ark was more or less forgotten. Was this perhaps emblematic of the fact that suspension of right worship and the dissolution of Israel always go hand in hand?

Once he finds the ark, David endeavors to bring it back. He places it in “a new cart”—that is, a cart that had never been used before for any secular purpose—and he commences the journey back to Jerusalem. We hear that Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, are directing the cart and that David and his entourage are dancing with

reckless abandon before the ark of Yahweh. When the festive liturgical procession reaches “the threshing floor of Chidon,” the oxen stumble and the ark is jostled. Uzzah, innocently enough, reaches out to steady it, at which point he is struck dead by an angry God.

There is probably no story in 1 Chronicles that puzzles and irritates a contemporary reader more than this one. To conceive of God’s ark as the bearer of a deadly electric charge and to conceive of God as a cruel tyrant capable of an utterly disproportionate reaction to a minor and unintentional liturgical infraction seems primitive at best and dangerous at worst. Much of the liberal, enlightened theologizing of the last two hundred years, in fact, militates against this sort of construal of God’s relationship with humanity. The problem for liberal theology is that this story is hardly egregious. The Bible is filled with accounts of God’s anger, justice, and punishment, and often enough, the biblical authors present a divine retribution that appears, at least to us, to be disproportionate or exaggerated.

What sense can be made of this? The one who created the whole of the cosmos—“the heavens and the earth” in more scriptural terminology—cannot be determined by any of the limitations or ontological conditions that circumscribe creatures. The one who gives the entirety of the being of the world cannot, for example, be characterized as standing in need of any further existential realization. This in turn entails the immutability of the Creator. It is crucially important to note that this has nothing to do with God being cold or indifferent to the world that he made and continues providentially to direct. God’s immutability means that God cannot change in a creaturely way—that is, in the manner of a finite being moving beyond its limits toward greater perfection of being. From God’s unchangeability, it can be deduced that God does not pass in and out of emotional states, shifting, as we do, from contentment to discontentment, from joy to anger, from anticipation to disappointment, and so on. As the author of 1 John clarifies, “God is love” (1 John 4:8), implying that the very to-be of God is identical with the stance and attitude of love. Mutable as we are, we creatures fall in and out of love; we love to varying degrees; we love and then we do not love. But this cannot be the case in regard to the God who stands beyond the ontological vagaries of the created realm.

But how does this divine love manifest itself? To answer that question adequately, we have to be clear on what love is. For the mainstream theological and spiritual tradition, love is not an emotion or a sentiment; rather, it is the act of willing the good of the other as other. This means that love expresses itself in a variety of ways depending upon the object of love. If I love someone who is on a self-destructive path, my willing of that person’s good will doubtless appear harsh, angry, even punitive, for I am trying to get that person rightly aligned. Therefore, God’s anger could be construed as a symbolic expression of God’s passion to set things right, as the dark face of his love. We might think of God’s love as a pure white light, which, upon passing through the prism of creation and history, breaks into a variety of colors. The language of the biblical authors, drawn as it must be from psychology and general experience, gestures analogically toward the various ways that the one divine love manifests itself in the world. Storytellers tend to express themselves in bold and exaggerated ways, and the biblical narrators are no exception. To give just two examples, think of the ages of the patriarchs or the numbers of warriors mustered for or killed in battle. When they want to gesture toward the divine passion to set things right, they often present a God raging in anger or burning with indignation or even putting thousands to death. Rather than literalizing this language either historically or psychologically, we should construe it as a poetic indication of the dark face of a love that remains essentially mysterious to us.

With those clarifications in mind, let us return to this particular story of Uzzah and the ark of the covenant. Why would Yahweh be angry at Uzzah’s attempt to prevent the sacred ark from falling to the ground? The key issue seems to be liturgical impropriety. In Exodus 25, we hear of God’s explicit instruction regarding the construction of the ark: “You shall make poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, by which to carry the ark. The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it” (Exod. 25:13–15). God wanted the ark designed in a very particular way, and he ordained that it be carried in a very particular way. The principal problem with David’s first attempt to carry the ark into his capital city is that he was hauling it by cart rather than carrying it by the poles. It was this faster but more precarious form of transport that caused the ark to

tip and Uzzah to react. Once more, the temptation is to conclude that a God who would respond with deadly violence to such a minor violation of liturgical law is surely unbalanced. Yet we have to keep the symbolic nature of the language in mind and get to the spiritual truths the author is endeavoring to communicate. The entire purpose of liturgy is to restore humanity to right order, *adoratio* leading to the harmonizing of self and society. Over the course of many centuries, Yahweh had been forming his people in the ways of orthodoxy; at the heart of this right praise is a decentering of the self, a twisting away from the ego and a turning toward God. As we saw, the founder of Israel was a man who listened to God, and the whole of Israelite life—covenant, worship, prophecy, and so on—was a systematic attempt to help the people to attend to Yahweh: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone” (Deut. 6:4). It was indeed more convenient to convey the ark by means of an oxcart, but Yahweh had instructed that it be carried by poles. A small matter? Perhaps, but obedience is the hinge on which Israelite life turns. God was angry not because Uzzah’s act personally offended him (in point of fact, the one who needs nothing from the world cannot, even in principle, be offended), but rather because it represented a compromising of the liturgical attitude.

The Church Fathers are eminently clear on this score. Chrysostom says, “As the wrath of God was drawn down on Uzzah for intruding on an office that was not his own, God’s wrath will likewise advance against those who subvert the Gospel.” Salvian remarks, “Uzzah’s punishment for steadying the ark shows that nothing may be considered lightly when it pertains to God.” Pacian of Barcelona comments, “So great a concern was there of reverence toward God that God did not accept bold hands even out of help.”

Another theological theme emerges from this odd tale that is worthy of some careful consideration: divine inscrutability and sublimity. The Creator of the universe cannot be categorized in any conventional philosophical system. God cannot be deftly defined or set in easy contrast to other beings or states of affairs. Thomas Aquinas catches the sheer strangeness of God when he comments that God is not in any genus, even the genus of being. Further, the providential range of God includes the whole of creation, which means the totality of space

and time. All of this implies that God’s activities and purposes in the world necessarily remain inscrutable to a finite mind: “O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!” (Rom. 11:33). The strangeness of God and his actions has nothing to do with capriciousness on God’s part; rather, it is a function of God’s absolutely unique manner of being and our limited consciousness. The author of the book of Job makes much the same point in his magnificently constructed dialogue between a frustrated human sufferer and the providential Lord of the entire cosmos. The utilization of a Kantian conceptual framework is helpful when speaking of the sublimity of God—that is, God’s overwhelming of the human sensorium and intellect. Hans Urs von Balthasar speaks of God as a raging Alpine torrent, which utterly smashes any receptors designed to channel it and convert it to human use. This divine sublimity is, by turns, thrilling and terrifying. The prophet Isaiah can exult in the overwhelming beauty of God manifested in a temple vision of cloud and angels (Isa. 6:1–3), but as the Letter to the Hebrews has it, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31). A one-sided stress on the latter quality gives us an arbitrary God, but a unilateral stress on the former gives us a superficial and manipulable God. Without for a moment rescinding any of the clarifications that I made above, I will also say this: Yahweh’s striking down of Uzzah is finally inexplicable, for it expresses and participates in the sublimity of God.

The sheer weirdness of God’s act helps to explain why “David was angry because the LORD had burst out against Uzzah. . . . David was afraid of God that day.” The ambivalence is eloquent, for both anger and fear are understandable reactions to the disorienting sublimity of God. In a pastoral context, the Christian minister discovers that anger at and fear of God are very common states of soul among those who are striving to believe in God. On account of this anger/fear, David resolves not to bring the ark into his capital and instead has it sent to the “house of Obed-edom the Gittite,” most likely a Philistine from Gath who attached himself to David during the time when David was a vassal of the king of Gath. In the earlier sections of the “ark narrative,” the presence of the ark of the covenant in the temple of the Philistines caused the foreign god to fall (1 Sam. 5:1–7). However, while the sacred vessel resides in the house of a Philistine

within Israel, “the LORD blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that he had.” Is this a foreshadowing of the ingathering of the nations, a hint of the blessings that would come to the peoples of the world when they ordered themselves around the right praise of God?

⁵ So David assembled all Israel from the Shihor of Egypt to Lebo-hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. ⁶ And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, that is, to Kiriath-jearim, which belongs to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, the LORD, who is enthroned on the cherubim, which is called by his name. ⁷ They carried the ark of God on a new cart, from the house of Abinadab, and Uzzah and Ahio were driving the cart. ⁸ David and all Israel were dancing before God with all their might, with song and lyres and harps and tambourines and cymbals and trumpets.

⁹ When they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzzah put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen shook it. ¹⁰ The anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; he struck him down because he put out his hand to the ark; and he died there before God. ¹¹ David was angry because the LORD had burst out against Uzzah; so that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. ¹² David was afraid of God that day; he said, “How can I bring the ark of God into my care?” ¹³ So David did not take the ark into his care into the city of David; he took it instead to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. ¹⁴ The ark of God remained with the household of Obed-edom in his house three months, and the LORD blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that he had.

DAVID ESTABLISHED AT JERUSALEM

14 King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs, and masons and carpenters to build a house for him. ² David then perceived that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of his people Israel.

³ David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David became the father of more sons and daughters. ⁴ These are the names of the children whom he had in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, and Nathan; Solomon, ⁵ Ibhar, Elishua, and Elpelet; ⁶ Nogah, Nepheg, and Japhia; ⁷ Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet.

A Consolidation of Kingship

1 Chronicles 14:1–7 | Bishop Barron

Once Jerusalem is established as the capital of a united nation, it begins to have its magnetic effect: “King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs, and masons and carpenters to build a house for him.” Read along purely political lines, Hiram’s gift might be seen as a subtle diplomatic move, an attempt to mollify a powerful neighbor. But read through a theological lens, the gift represents one of the first indications that the Adamic mission of Israel—the Edenization of the world—is being successfully carried out.

The precise nature of Hiram’s donation is interesting for at least two reasons. First, by helping to build the palace of David, he provides the most vivid indicator of the king’s establishment and staying power; he, a foreigner, writes a fitting climax to the story of David’s rise to power as king of Israel. Second, the “house” of David is an absolutely central theme in the book of Chronicles, since it calls to mind both the dynasty that would flow from David and the great house of Yahweh, the temple that Solomon would build. (Indeed, if this Hiram of Tyre is the same king who provided supplies for Solomon’s building project, the incident described must have taken place somewhat late in David’s career and hence is out of place this early in the story.) The foreignness of Hiram is an important sign that non-Jews

would in time be summoned to worship at the house of Yahweh.

In the immediate wake of the construction of his palace, David then perceives that the Lord has established him king over Israel. Had he not perceived this when the elders came together at Hebron? Or when he conquered Jerusalem? Why would the building of his house particularly trigger David’s awareness of his sovereignty? It has to be the “international” quality of Hiram’s gift. David knows that he is king of the nation intended to gather the world precisely when a non-Israelite king acknowledges him.

A further sign of the consolidation of David’s kingship is the numerous concubines and wives he takes, which results in a small army of children. Along with the six children that David fathered in Hebron, we now hear of thirteen more offspring that David fathers while he is king in Jerusalem: “Shammua, Shobab, and Nathan; Solomon, Ibhar, Elishua, and Elpelet; Nogah, Nepheg, and Japhia; Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet.”

Besides demonstrating the love for lists of names evident throughout the Bible, the author, in this context, bothers to spell out each of David’s offspring in order to show as concretely as possible how the king is fulfilling the command to Adam to go forth and multiply as well as ratifying the covenant promise

to Abraham that he would be the father of innumerable descendants. As is typical of the Old Testament authors in general, this high theological observation is coupled with a keen sense of the realities on the ground. David's irresponsible choice of numerous wives and concubines results in at least

the thirteen children who are explicitly named. This large coterie of offspring, whom David never manages adequately to discipline, will be the source of unrelenting suffering in the wake of the Bathsheba incident. Once more, David is presented as the Adamic king in both his pre-fall and post-fall phases.

DEFEAT OF THE PHILISTINES

⁸ When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up in search of David; and David heard of it and went out against them. ⁹ Now the Philistines had come and made a raid in the valley of Rephaim. ¹⁰ David inquired of God, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?" The LORD said to him, "Go up, and I will give them into your hand." ¹¹ So he went up to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there. David said, "God has burst out against my enemies by my hand, like a bursting flood." Therefore that place is called Baal-perazim. ¹² They abandoned their gods there, and at David's command they were burned.

¹³ Once again the Philistines made a raid in the valley. ¹⁴ When David again inquired of God, God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; go around and come on them opposite the balsam trees. ¹⁵ When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then go out to battle; for God has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines."

St. Ambrose
(339–397)

Duties of
the Clergy



David Inquired of God

1 Chronicles 14:8–17

[David] never entered a war without seeking counsel of the Lord. Thus he was victorious in all wars, and even to his last years was ready to fight.

¹⁶ David did as God had commanded him, and they struck down the Philistine army from Gibeon to Gezer. ¹⁷ The fame of David went out into all lands, and the LORD brought the fear of him on all nations.

THE ARK BROUGHT TO JERUSALEM

15 David built houses for himself in the city of David, and he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. ² Then David commanded that no one but the Levites were to carry the ark of God, for the LORD had chosen them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister to him forever. ³ David assembled all Israel in Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it. ⁴ Then David gathered together the descendants of Aaron and the Levites: ⁵ of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, with one hundred twenty of his kindred; ⁶ of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, with two hundred twenty of his kindred; ⁷ of the sons of Gershon, Joel the chief, with one hundred thirty of his kindred; ⁸ of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, with two hundred of his kindred; ⁹ of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, with eighty of his kindred; ¹⁰ of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, with one hundred twelve of his kindred.

¹¹ David summoned the priests Zadok and Abiathar, and the Levites Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. ¹² He said to them, "You are the heads of families of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your kindred, so that you may bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it. ¹³ Because you did not carry it the first time, the LORD our God burst out against us, because we did not give it proper care." ¹⁴ So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁵ And the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.

¹⁶ David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their kindred as the singers to play on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise loud sounds of joy. ¹⁷ So the Levites appointed Heman son of Joel; and of his kindred Asaph son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari, their kindred, Ethan son of Kushaiah; ¹⁸ and with them their kindred of the second order, Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, and Mikneiah, and the gatekeepers Obed-edom and Jeiel. ¹⁹ The singers Heman, Asaph, and Ethan were to sound bronze cymbals; ²⁰ Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah were to play harps according to Alamoth; ²¹ but Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah were to lead with lyres according to the Sheminith.



St. Joseph

The graying head of St. Joseph, incongruously large, looks on through the narrow arched window on whose sill the spindle rests, lending a homely note to the scene. The tradition that he married the Virgin in his old age is first found in the *Protoevangelium of James*.

1 Chronicles 13–16

THE MASTER OF ERFURT | c. 1400

The Virgin Weaving

Essay by Sean Stevens

This German Gothic work possesses a childlike charm, while illuminating Mary's part in the mystery of the Word made flesh. Notwithstanding its title, it presents the Virgin as spinning, not weaving, wool, the thread extending from the distaff of raw wool in the upper right, across the radiant Child Jesus in utero, to a spindle on the lower left. The gold leaf accents, the rich, delicately varied colors, and the flowing lines of Mary's attire are typical of German Gothic.

The image of the weaving Virgin has roots in one canonical text (Proverbs) and two apocryphal gospels (the *Protoevangelium of James*, c. 150, and the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, late seventh century). The sinless Virgin is the ideal of the virtuous wife, who "seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands. . . . She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle" (Prov. 31:13, 19). A fifth-century homily by Proclus of Constantinople praised Mary as "the awesome loom of the divine economy upon which the robe of union [between God and humanity] was ineffably woven." She is the New Eve, who weaves together what the first Eve tore apart—the "seamless" garment (John 19:23) of the now-indissoluble union of God with man.

In the *Protoevangelium of James* and *Pseudo-Matthew*, Mary's parents present her in the temple, where she is raised along with other virgins dedicated to God. (The presentation of Mary in the temple thereafter became a frequent theme in the art of both the Byzantine and Western churches.) *Pseudo-Matthew* recounts that one of the virgins' tasks is to weave the temple veil, with the colors of yarn being assigned by lot. It falls to Mary to weave together the purple yarn (foreshadowing the kingship of her son) and the scarlet (foreshadowing his Passion). In her womb, she will also weave together his body (Ps. 139:13, 15), later to become the "temple" torn by the soldier's lance (John 2:21, 19:34), while the veil she weaves before his birth is destined to be rent from top to bottom at the moment of his death (Matt. 27:51).

David's Dance Before the Ark

1 Chronicles 15 | Bishop Barron

INSPIRED BY THE BENEDICTION of Obed-edom's house, David endeavors anew to bring the ark into its proper house in Jerusalem. What ensues is one of the richest and most festive liturgical processions described in the Bible. The king is careful not to repeat the mistake of hauling the ark by oxcart. This time, he arranges for bearers to carry the ark by poles set through rings, as specified in the book of Exodus.

Further, "because God helped the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams." The point is made that the ark is conducted in a festive but sacrificial attitude and that the people are aware of both their blessing and their sin. In the killing of the animals is the anticipation of the thousands upon thousands of sacrifices that would take place over the centuries in the Jerusalem temple. Though the practice is utterly alien to us, the logic of sacrifice is quite straightforward. One returns to God some aspect of creation in order to signal one's gratitude for the whole of creation, for a blessing received, or in reparation for sins committed. The Creator of the universe cannot possibly need anything in the universe; however, the offerer of the sacrifice needs the act of sacrifice in order to become rightly oriented to God. Further, sacrifices involve the death of an animal so that the inner pain of this reorientation might be adequately symbolized. This great sacrificial procession, evocative of the entire sacrificial history and attitude of Israel, was presided over by the one who is not only king but priest as well.

The priesthood of David is unmistakably referenced in the garb that the king dons for the parade: he "wore a linen ephod." In Exodus, in the description of the priestly vestments to be worn by Aaron and his sons, the ephod is mentioned a number of times (Exod. 28:15, 35; 29:5). And in Leviticus, we hear that Moses "brought Aaron and his sons forward, and washed them in water. He put the

tunic on him, fastened the sash around him, clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him" (Lev. 8:6–7). Most tellingly for our purposes, Saul, having invaded the sanctuary of Nob in search of David, ordered Doeg the Edomite to kill the priests, and we are told that "on that day he killed eighty-five who wore the linen ephod" (1 Sam. 22:18). In putting on the garment of the priesthood, David decides to assume the role and take up the task of those fallen victims of Saul. But he is also hearkening back to Samuel, Eli, and the Aaronic priesthood as well as to the priesthood of Adam, the first one to assume the stance of adoration. Only in light of the connection to Adam can we fully understand the energetic dance of the king before the ark of Yahweh. Before the fall, Adam walked in easy fellowship with Yahweh, thinking his thoughts, feeling his feelings, moving as he moved. He danced in unison with Yahweh. Sin is nothing but a falling out of step with God, an insistence upon dancing to one's own rhythm. The whole of the history of salvation might be characterized as Yahweh's attempt to restore the sacred dance, to get his human creatures to move with him. Accordingly David, dancing with energy before the ark, is humanity dancing with Yahweh, recovering the effortless harmony of Eden. Some argue that the gestures and movements of the priests in the Jerusalem temple were intended to mimic, in a stylized way, the exuberant dance of King David. And since the ritual moves of the Catholic and Orthodox liturgies trace their origins to the temple, the conclusion could be made that the processions, gestures, and bows of Christian priests today participate in the priesthood of the king who wore the ephod as he danced before the ark.

I would wager that there is still another element of this story that makes it puzzling for most moderns: why David and his people would be dancing before the law. The ark contained manna and the staff of Aaron, but it also contained, most importantly, the tablets of the Ten Commandments, the rather strict provisions and prohibitions given by Yahweh to Moses on Mount Sinai. Most reasonable people in the West today accept the law—from traffic regulations to income tax—as a necessary evil, something that, in the best of all possible worlds, they can do without. Therefore, it would be difficult indeed to imagine anyone dancing with joy before the tax code or the latest motor vehicle statutes, or even before the US Constitution. To understand

the coherence of David's dance, one needs to grasp the sea change that occurred from biblical to modern times in regard both to law and to freedom. On the modern reading, freedom is primarily choice and self-determination. The roots of this view stretch back to the late medieval period, to the speculations of the English Franciscan William of Ockham. For him, human freedom is utterly autonomous, for it is the capacity to choose, on the basis of no constraint, either interior or exterior. The sheer independence of the will, he argues, can be proved by an act of suicide committed by a sincere religious believer, for such a move against the supreme good is made in the presence of the supreme good.

The contemporary Thomist Servais Pinckaers refers to this Ockhamist notion as "the freedom of indifference," for it is predicated on the assumption that the free agent hovers indifferently above the yes and the no. An implication of this way of construing freedom is that each moral act is monadic, something like a Whiteheadian actual occasion. Precisely because the truly free choice is determined by nothing whatsoever, neither the character of the agent nor the succession of the agent's previous moral moves has a determining influence on a present ethical choice. On this interpretation, law must be seen as a limitation on freedom and hence as a necessary evil at best. Freedom, perforce, chafes against the law, and law, by its very nature, sets limits to unruly freedom. Moreover, when Ockham extrapolates theologically from this construal of freedom, he arrives at an understanding of God as a supremely arbitrary power. And since the divine freedom is as unconstrained in its essence as human freedom, infinite and finite liberty necessarily confront one another as opponents, and their relationship is mediated only by a divine law powerfully imposed. Many argue that this account of the God-human relationship conduces by a few short logical steps to atheism, for such a God is inevitably seen as a threat to human flourishing. Hence, Feuerbach concludes, "The no to God is the yes to man," and Sartre formulates this pithy syllogism: If God exists, I cannot be free; but I am free; therefore, God does not exist. But prior to Ockham, there was a very different notion of freedom, what Pinckaers calls *liberté de qualite* (freedom for excellence). Here, freedom is not primarily choice and self-creation but the disciplining of desire in order to make the achievement of the good first possible and then effortless.

One becomes a free player of the violin, capable of playing any type of music, precisely in the measure that one submits to a range of disciplines, laws, and practices. Or one becomes a free swinger of the golf club, able to respond effortlessly to the shifting demands of the game, inasmuch as one has internalized the laws and rules that govern a good swing. On this interpretation, law is not the opponent to freedom, but rather the condition for its possibility. A most important concomitant of this notion is a view articulated in the philosophical anthropology of Thomas Aquinas: will is a function of intellect. For Aquinas, the will emerges at the moment when the mind understands the good as good, and this entails that the objective good never stands over and against freedom as a constraint, but rather informs it and guides it at every turn. The theological implications are significantly non-Ockhamist. God is free not inasmuch as he stands in sovereign indifference to the yes and the no but inasmuch as he can only say yes—that is, in the measure that his will is utterly congruent with the goodness of his being. With God and freedom so construed, the divine will is not a threat to human flourishing; quite the contrary, the sacred law is something in the presence of which a grateful humanity might be moved to dance.

I would like to make a final set of observations and associations about David's dance. A connection that the Church Fathers make with particular enthusiasm is between the ark of the covenant, which bore the divine law, and Mary of Nazareth, who bore the divine presence in the fullest possible sense. Maximus of Turin says, "But what would we say the ark was if not holy Mary, since the ark carried within it the tables of the covenant, while Mary bore the master of the same covenant?" One of the many artistic depictions of this patristic association is the relief of a juxtaposed Mary and the ark, which is carved in stone over the left portal at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. A number of symbolic echoes can be heard. David arose and went to get the ark, which was in the house of Abinadab, situated on a "hill" (probably a shrine) in the country of Judah (2 Sam. 6:3). In the Gospel of Luke, we are told that just after the angel Gabriel's annunciation to Mary, "Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth" (Luke 1:39–40). In other words, the supreme ark, like its prototype, situates itself on a hilltop shrine in Judea. I

do not say “shrine” casually here, for Zechariah is a temple priest and Elizabeth a descendant of Aaron, the first priest. Further, after the death of Uzzah, David asks, “How can the ark of the LORD come into my care?” (2 Sam. 6:9). Upon receiving her cousin, Elizabeth asks, “And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?” (Luke 1:43). Both David and Elizabeth are unworthy to be in the presence of the bearer of the Lord. The king danced with all his might before the ark, and “when Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb” (Luke 1:41)—the unborn John the Baptist performing an infant’s dance in the presence of the true Ark. Finally, an intriguing detail: after the Uzzah incident, David sent the ark, as we saw, to the home of Obed-edom, where it stayed for three months. After proclaiming her great song, the Magnificat, “Mary remained with [Elizabeth] about three months and then returned to her home” (Luke 1:56). There can be little doubt that Luke is consciously echoing these stories of the ark in order to highlight Mary’s identity as Theotokos, the “God-bearer.”

²² Chenaniah, leader of the Levites in music, was to direct the music, for he understood it. ²³ Berechiah and Elkanah were to be gatekeepers for the ark. ²⁴ Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, were to blow the trumpets before the ark of God. Obed-edom and Jehiah also were to be gatekeepers for the ark.

²⁵ So David and the elders of Israel, and the commanders of the thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-edom with rejoicing. ²⁶ And because God helped the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams. ²⁷ David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as also were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the leader of the music of the singers; and David wore a linen ephod. ²⁸ So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, to the sound of the horn, trumpets, and cymbals, and made loud music on harps and lyres.

²⁹ As the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, Michal daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing; and she despised him in her heart.

**St. Gregory
the Great**
(540–604)

*Morals on the
Book of Job*



By Dancing He Overcame Himself

1 Chronicles 15:25–29

It seems good to observe what great gifts of virtues David had obtained, and in all these with how firm a humility he maintained himself. For whom would it not puff up, to break the mouths of lions; to rend asunder the arms of bears; to be chosen, when his elder brothers had been despised; to be anointed to the government of the kingdom, when the king had been rejected; to slay with a single stone Goliath who was dreaded by all; to bring back, after the destruction of the [Philistines], the numerous foreskins proposed by the king [see 1 Sam. 18:25–27]; to receive at last the promised kingdom, and to possess the whole people of Israel without any contradiction? And yet, when he brings back the ark of God to Jerusalem, he dances before the ark, mingled with the people, as though forgetful that he had been preferred to them all.

And because, as is believed, it had been the custom of the common people to dance before the ark, the king wheels round in the dance, in service to God. Behold how he whom the Lord preferred specially above all humbles himself before the Lord, both by making himself equal with the least and by displaying lowly behavior. The power of his kingdom is not recalled to his memory; he fears not to be made low in the eyes of his people by dancing; he remembers not, before the ark of him who had given him honor, that he had been preferred in honor above the rest. Before God he acted with even the most extreme lowliness, in order to strengthen by his humility the bold deeds he had performed in the sight of men.



What is thought by others of his doings, I know not; I am more surprised at David dancing than fighting. For by fighting he subdued his enemies; but by dancing before the Lord he overcame himself.

THE ARK PLACED IN THE TENT

16 They brought in the ark of God, and set it inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and they offered burnt offerings and offerings of well-being before God. ²When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the offerings of well-being, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD; ³and he distributed to every person in Israel—man and woman alike—to each a loaf of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins.

⁴He appointed certain of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the LORD, to invoke, to thank, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel.

⁵Asaph was the chief, and second to him Zechariah, Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel, with harps and lyres; Asaph was to sound the cymbals, ⁶and the priests Benaiah and Jahaziel were to blow trumpets regularly, before the ark of the covenant of God.

DAVID'S PSALM OF THANKSGIVING

⁷Then on that day David first appointed the singing of praises to the LORD by Asaph and his kindred.

⁸O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.

⁹Sing to him, sing praises to him,
tell of all his wonderful works.

¹⁰Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

¹¹Seek the LORD and his strength,
seek his presence continually.

¹²Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he uttered,

¹³O offspring of his servant Israel,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

The Power of Right Praise

1 Chronicles 16:7–36 | Bishop Barron

The Psalm prayer echoed in Chronicles opens on an exultant note of praise and thanksgiving, clearly indicating that this composition is in the genre of the *todah*, a song of gratitude to God: “O give thanks to the LORD. . . . Sing to him, sing praises to him, tell of all his wonderful works.” Here the narrator moves with assurance and joy into the stance of Adam prior to the fall—which is to say, the attitude of *adoratio*. Whenever Israel gives highest honor to Yahweh, it is set right.

The first man was presented by the rabbis of the intertestamental period and by the Church Fathers as priest as well as king. Walking in easy fellowship with Yahweh, Adam naturally occupied the stance of adoration, a word derived from *adoratio* (*ad ora*; literally, “to the mouth”). To adore is to be mouth to mouth with God, breathing in his divine life and breathing out praise. The opening of the Song of Solomon—“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!” (Song of Sol. 1:2)—can be seen not only as a cry of erotic desire but also as a longing of the soul for worship. Mouth to mouth, one is “reconciled” to God (from the Latin *cilia*, meaning “eyelashes”), and eyelash to eyelash with him as well. So aligned, everything in the worshiper becomes properly ordered.

In the attitude of adoration, Adam was, accordingly, the first priest, and the ordered garden that surrounded him can be construed as the primordial temple. Right praise (*orthodoxy*) leads to the right ordering of the person who gives praise, and it also conduces toward the right ordering of the family, community, society, and cosmos that surrounds that person.

In this context, we can understand a remark often associated with Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the founders of the Catholic Worker Movement: “Cult cultivates the culture.” Business, finance, politics, sports, the arts, entertainment, and so on—all these find their proper place and realize their proper finality when they are grounded in the praise of God. One could read the liturgical prayer “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will,” not only as a word of praise, but also as a kind of formula: when glory is given to God above all things, then peace breaks out among us.

Word Study

תודה

TODAH

Noun
Thanksgiving

SEEK THE LORD *and his* STRENGTH.

1 CHRONICLES 16:11

Origen
(184–253)

Against Celsus



God Anointed Them

1 Chronicles 16:22

There was no need that there should everywhere exist many bodies and many spirits like Jesus, in order that the whole world of men might be enlightened by the Word of God. For the one Word was enough, having arisen as the “sun of righteousness” (Mal. 4:2), to send forth from Judea his coming rays into the souls of all who were willing to receive him. But if anyone desires to see many bodies filled with a divine Spirit, similar to the one Christ, ministering to the salvation of men everywhere, let him take note of those who teach the Gospel of Jesus in all lands in soundness of doctrine and uprightness of life, and who are themselves termed “Christs” by the Holy Scriptures, in the passage “Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm.”



For as we have heard that Antichrist comes and yet have learned that there are many antichrists in the world, in the same way, knowing that Christ has come, we see that, owing to him, there are many Christs in the world, who, like him, have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and therefore God, the God of Christ, anointed them also with the “oil of gladness” (Ps. 45:7).

- ¹⁴ He is the LORD our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.
- ¹⁵ Remember his covenant forever,
the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,
- ¹⁶ the covenant that he made with Abraham,
his sworn promise to Isaac,
- ¹⁷ which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant,
- ¹⁸ saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan
as your portion for an inheritance.”
- ¹⁹ When they were few in number,
of little account, and strangers in the land,
- ²⁰ wandering from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another people,
- ²¹ he allowed no one to oppress them;
he rebuked kings on their account,
- ²² saying, “Do not touch my anointed ones;
do my prophets no harm.”
- ²³ Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Tell of his salvation from day to day.
- ²⁴ Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples.
- ²⁵ For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be revered above all gods.
- ²⁶ For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.

²⁷ Honor and majesty are before him;
strength and joy are in his place.

²⁸ Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

²⁹ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering, and come before him.

Worship the LORD in holy splendor;

³⁰ tremble before him, all the earth.

The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.

³¹ Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice,
and let them say among the nations, "The LORD is king!"

³² Let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
let the field exult, and everything in it.

³³ Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy
before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth.

³⁴ O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever.

³⁵ Say also:

"Save us, O God of our salvation,
and gather and rescue us from among the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name,
and glory in your praise.

³⁶ Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting."

Then all the people said "Amen!" and praised the LORD.

REGULAR WORSHIP MAINTAINED

³⁷ David left Asaph and his kinsfolk there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD to minister regularly before the ark as each day required, ³⁸ and also Obed-edom and his sixty-eight kinsfolk; while Obed-edom son of Jeduthun and Hosah were to be gatekeepers. ³⁹ And he left the priest Zadok and his kindred the priests before the tabernacle of the LORD in the high place that was at Gibeon, ⁴⁰ to offer burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering regularly, morning and evening, according to all that is written in the law of the LORD that he commanded Israel.

⁴¹ With them were Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest of those chosen and expressly named to render thanks to the LORD, for his steadfast love endures forever. ⁴² Heman and Jeduthun had with them trumpets

O GIVE THANKS TO THE
LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD;
FOR HIS STEADFAST LOVE
ENDURES FOREVER.

1 CHRONICLES 16:34

and cymbals for the music, and instruments for sacred song. The sons of Jeduthun were appointed to the gate.

⁴³ Then all the people departed to their homes, and David went home to bless his household.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID

17 Now when David settled in his house, David said to the prophet Nathan, "I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under a tent." ² Nathan said to David, "Do all that you have in mind, for God is with you."

³ But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: ⁴ Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: You shall not build me a house to live in. ⁵ For I have not lived in a house since the day I brought out Israel to this very day, but I have lived in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁶ Wherever I have moved about among all Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people, saying, Why have you not built me a house of cedar? ⁷ Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people Israel;



Peacocks

Ancient pre-Christian religious traditions believed that the skin of peacocks did not decay, leading to their use as a symbol of immortality. Christians adopted this tradition and applied it to Christ, in whom the undying, everlasting kingdom of God is established. The peacocks here stand with the Host in their plumage and with grapevines below them, signifying the Eucharist as "the throne of grace" and divine life (Heb. 4:16).

1 Chronicles 17:10–14

UNKNOWN ARTIST | Eighth century

Christ Enthroned (from the Book of Kells)

Essay by Andrew Tolkmith

This splendid rendering of Christ on his heavenly throne appears in the Book of Kells, a late eighth-century illuminated manuscript that consists of the four Gospels and supplementary commentaries. It is perhaps the finest example of early medieval art that has survived to the present day. Scholars believe the Book of Kells was composed by monks at the monastery in Iona, a small island off the western coast of Scotland, and later moved to the monastery of Kells in Ireland, where the manuscript was likely completed and grew in fame throughout the Middle Ages.

Every page of the Book of Kells has astonishing detail and intricacy, and *Christ Enthroned* is no exception. This kind of medieval artwork, particular to the British Isles and thus called "insular art," aimed to fill the page with dense illustrations and calligraphic ornaments. In this example, these stylistic techniques are on full display in the interlacing patterns of the page's four corners, and the stained-glass brilliance of the colors in the illustration's rectangular frame. The manuscript, as a whole and in its parts, is a visual meditation on God's self-revelation in the Scriptures, as described in Ephesians: "He has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:22–23).

The magnificence of *Christ Enthroned* reflects that of the prophecy made to David in 1 Chronicles 17, which features an eternal throne, divine sonship, and the reign of Israel over the whole earth. The very glory promised by God to David becomes a reality in his divine descendant.