

Before starting this lesson, read at **least 1 Samuel 31; 1 Chronicles 10, 29; 2 Chronicles 7, 20, 35, 36** If possible read the whole book (skipping over the long lists of names or geneologies). You may find it helpful to read just the minimum chapters, go thru the lesson and then read the whole book. You will discover what works best for you.

Down thru history the books of **Chronicles** have been given 3 different names.

יְמִידְבְּרִי ה'

When they were originally written in Hebrew, they were called **Events of the Times**. *Div-ráy Ha-yah-meém*

Two hundred years later, when the Jews translated these books from Hebrew into Greek, (the LXX,) they noticed 2 things about them.

First of all, they did not include **all** the events of the times.

Secondly, the books gave details that Samuel and Kings had never mentioned.

παρλειπομενον

So they changed the name from *Events of the Times* to **Things left out** - the Greek title was *Paraleipómenon*

600 more years went by. By then, people were speaking Latin. So a Bible scholar named Jerome translated the books from the original Hebrew into Latin. (the Vulgate)

When he finished, he did not want to use the Hebrew title because it was not **all** the events.

The Greek title was even worse - *Things Left Out*.

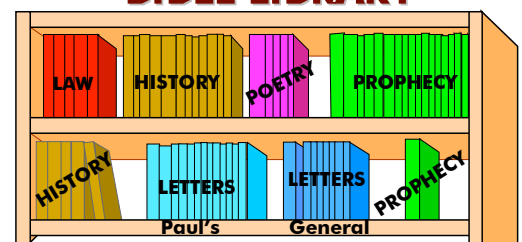
It sounded like the books were left over information the other writers forgot. That implied the sacred writings of God had been defective and incomplete. But that certainly was not true. These books needed a more accurate name.

So he named them *Liber Chronicorum* i.e. **Book of Records or Chronicles**. Today, all modern Bibles use the name, *Chronicles*. (Only 2 old translations still use the Greek title *Paraleipomenon*, Douay and Confraternity)

To understand the books of Chronicles, we need to understand about all the other historical books of the Bible. From the time of Joshua onward, the Jews had special Levites who wrote down events as they happened. They were called Levite **historians**. They wrote the history – the civil records, protected the documents and made copies of them.

Over the years, as one generation of historians died, new generations continued the civil records. They wrote about Joshua, the 300 years of the judges, (1350-1050 BC) the days of Saul, David and Solomon, the civil war, the exiles of the north and south and all the rest of events in the Old Testament. In other words, the Jews had 1000 years of written history from 1400 to 400 BC. It was the Levite **historians** who did all this writing.

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Now let's back up to the days of Joshua once again. Besides Levite **historians**, there were also Levite **scribes**. The Holy

Spirit guides them to go thru all the civil records, choose only the parts showing God's actions and the Jews' response. They took these parts and put them together to form sacred writings. They also protected these writings and made additional copies.

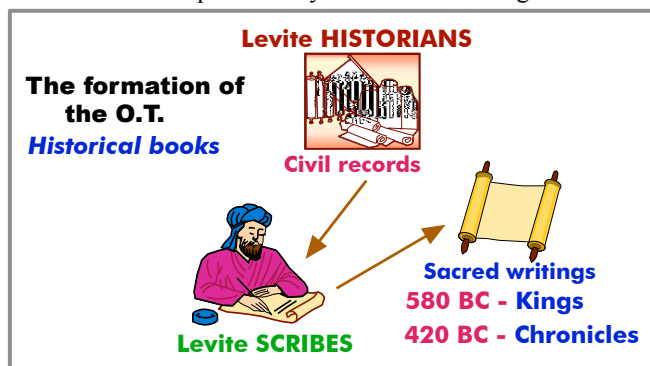
This process begins 50 years after Joshua dies. **Scribes** go thru the historical records of that time. Guided by the Holy Spirit, they picked out portions showing God's actions and the people's response and formed the book of **Joshua**.

Twenty years after all the judge leaders, **scribes** go thru 300 years worth of documents, take the special parts of them and form our book of **Judges** (1030 BC). One hundred and fifty years after the life of Ruth and Naomi, **scribes** again go thru the

history of the judges, find the story of these women and form the book we call **Ruth**. 1000 BC.

Ten years after David, **scribes** choose events from the last 200 years and form the books we call **1 and 2 Samuel**. (960 BC)

Six years after Judah's exile, in 580 BC, the **scribes** go thru their last 400 years of history and write down only the parts that showed God's action and the people's response. It became the books we call **1 and 2 Kings**. This was of tremendous benefit to the Jews in exile. Now they had the big picture and could clearly see God's justice. They were in exile because of their choices. Over a period of 400 years they had continually rejected God.



Then 116 years after thousands of Jews returned from exile and re-established the nation of Judah, God again directs Levite **scribes** to write a book. This time they review the last 500 years of their civil records and once again take out the parts that show God's actions and the people's response. It becomes yet another book of their religious history - our books of **Chronicles**. This happens in 420 BC. Ezra, who was also a Levite scribe, makes a final edition in 400 BC.

It is Levite **scribes**, writing over the centuries, who formed all the **historical** books – Joshua thru Esther.

In our Bibles, we have 2 books of Chronicles. But originally it was just one book – one scroll.

The **OUTLINE** shows the unity.

1 Chron. 1-9	Genealogies - a list of family trees	The two books cover 475 years from 1010 to 536 BC
10-29	David's Reign	
2 Chron. 1-9	Solomon's Reign	
10-36	Kings of Judah	

Looking at the outline, we immediately see these books repeat the history covered in the books of Samuel and Kings. However, Chronicles is very different.

Samuel and Kings are biographical – focusing on the lives of the kings.

Chronicles is statistical – focusing on lists of names and family trees.

Samuel and Kings are the religious history of both nations - Judah and Israel

Chronicles is only the history of Judah.

Samuel and Kings are all about the throne

Chronicles is about the temple.

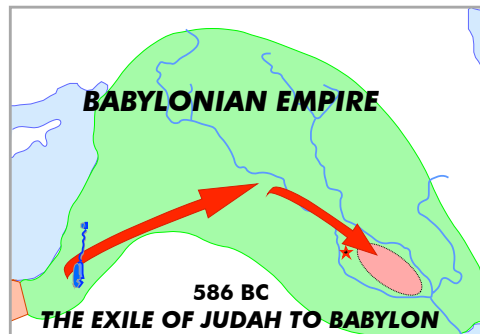
Samuel and Kings were written either **before** or during the first years of exile in Babylon.

Chronicles is written 100 years after the **end** of the exile.

Taken from *Explore the Book*, J. Sidlow Baxter, British Bible scholar 1903-1999.

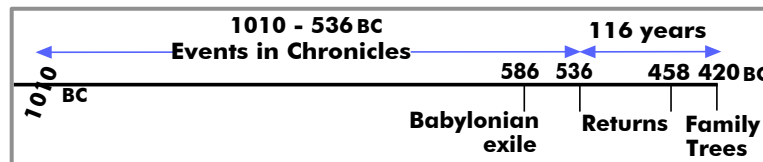
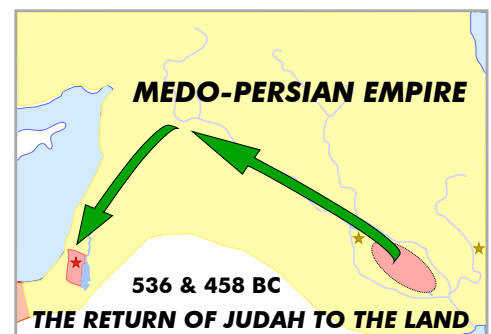
To understand why these books are different in style and content we need a bigger picture of Jewish history

By **586 BC**, all the Jews from Judah had been taken into exile in Babylon.



They were there for 70 years.

Then in **536** and later in **458** BC, thousands of Jews returned to re-establish the land of Judah. They rebuilt their temple and their capital, the city of Jerusalem. One hundred and sixteen years go by.



It is now **420 BC**. At this point, the Jews in Judah need to update their family records.

The tribe of **Levi** needs their family records for a **religious** purpose

If a Levite man was descended from Aaron's family, he would be a priest

If he came from other family lines of Levi, then based on the subdivision in that line, he would either be a temple musician, guard, judge, teacher, historian, scribe, librarian or temple custodian.

Because the Jews have a new temple and population has increased, they will need more Levites and more priests. Genealogies need to be updated so Levites can prove they are from the tribe of Levi and also know their place of ministry.

The tribe of **Judah** needs their family records for a **civil** purpose.

From the beginning, the Jews were looking for their Messiah. They learned He would come from the tribe of Judah and from the family of David. Records need to be current so when the Messiah comes, He can be identified. People will need to see evidence that He is qualified.

It is significant that when Jesus came in the 1st century AD, all the records - both the sacred writings and civil documents were readily available because they were stored in the Temple. It is true that the Jews always had and always will have religious and personal copies of family records. But after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, records would not be as trustworthy nor available. Down thru history, wars and persecution have tragically destroyed even more records. So while there will always be records, they will not be the same as they were in the 1st century while the Temple was still standing. When Jesus came, there was instant written proof of his lineage, that no one could doubt. It is why Paul said that Jesus came at the exact time when everything was ready and complete. Galatians 4:4

In the days of the Old Testament, the **historians** had already realized this problem. While they continued to update family records and store them with the **civil** documents, they knew this was not enough. Reality had proven that **historical** documents could be lost, ruined or destroyed. This is why the historians now wanted important family records included in their **sacred** writings. Since those books were from God, God would protect them and they would never be destroyed.

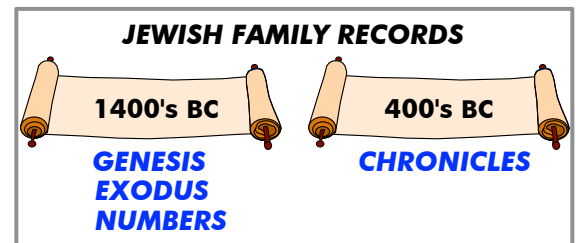
Moses put the beginning records of the 12 tribes in his books - *Genesis, Exodus and Numbers*. But that was in the 1400's. It is now the 400's BC, 1000 years later. So all the family records over the last 1000 years need to be transferred and updated from the *civil* documents to the *sacred* writings.

This is why Chronicles begins with 9 chapters of genealogies. It is tracing the families of the 12 tribes back to their roots. When we are reading these books to understand the flow of history, we can skip over them. They have little meaning for us. But they have great meaning for others.

They are important for Bible **scholars** to know the connection between these people.

They are important for **Jews** to check out the claims of Jesus - if He is their Messiah.

What may be hard for us to believe is that there are literally thousands of Jews who have put their faith in Jesus as a result of reading the genealogies in Chronicles and then comparing them with the records in Matthew and Luke. The family records convinced them that Jesus **had** the right lineage. He is their Messiah.



Back in 420 BC, the Jews need this new book of religious history – **Chronicles** - to update family records.

They also need it to explain historical events.

It is one thing to know about the **events** of history - it is quite another to know **why** they happened and what **God** had to do with them.

Saul was the first Jewish king. According to **1 Samuel** 31, at the end of his kingship - in 1010 BC, he went to battle against the enemy and lost. He was mortally wounded and knew he would die within a few hours. He also knew the enemy was nearby and if they captured him alive, they would put him thru cruel torture. So to hasten his already certain death, he fell on his own sword. These are the historical facts.

1 Chronicles 10, gives the same event with the same facts. It is the end of the chapter that gives more information. Verse 13 gives the **explanation** of the facts.

Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord; he did not keep the word of the Lord and even consulted a medium for guidance and did not inquire of the Lord. So the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David, son of Jesse.

When God's king over God's people does not seek God's direction and turns to a witch for help, he is no longer qualified to be God's leader. So God removes him from the scene, but He does it thru natural causes - thru a battle. **1 Samuel** gives the historical fact. Saul dies in battle. **Chronicles** lets us know it was not an accident or pure happenstance. **God** caused him to lose the battle, be mortally wounded by the enemy and die. *The Lord put him to death.*

Let's take another example. In Kings we read about a king of Judah named Jehoshaphat.

We are told in **1 Kings 22**... *Jehoshaphat built a fleet of trading ships to go to Ophir for gold, but they never set sail - they were wrecked at Ezion Geber. 22:48* These are the facts.

2 Chronicles gives the same account and then explains **why**. 2 Chronicles 20: 35

*Later, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah made an alliance with Ahaziah king of Israel, who was guilty of wickedness. He (the good king) agreed with him (the bad king) to construct a fleet of trading ships. After these were built at Ezion Geber, Eliezer (a prophet) prophesied against the good king saying, **Because** you have made an alliance with the bad king, the Lord will destroy what you have made. The ships were wrecked and were not able to set sail to trade.*

Kings gives us the historical facts - *the ships were wrecked*. Chronicles gives the spiritual explanation - **why** they were wrecked. Jehoshaphat, a king who followed God, made a business deal with a king who despised God. The godly king would never have been able to honor God in this plan, so **God** sent a storm to wreck the ships while they were still in port. God stopped it before it even got started.

At some point when you are going thru these books, you might want to highlight the words *therefore, since, so, because or then*. God continually uses these words to explain His actions in the past. He sent consequences so they would repent.

Chronicles is written **To update the Jews' family records**
To explain historical events of the past
To change the focus of the Jews

From the days of Saul, the Jews always focused on their nation and king. But God knew that from the time they returned from exile to this present day, they would never have another king. There would be no further king until their Messiah King comes to set up His Kingdom.

So there is no point in focusing on the **political** king and the throne. God wants their life to focus on the Temple, on the **spiritual**, on their relationship to Him.

We can see this change of focus when we compare the books of Kings and Chronicles

In the story of Solomon's life, **Kings** uses 45% of the chapters to tell about the temple, 4½ chapters out of 10
Chronicles uses 66% of its chapters 6 out of 9 chapters.

In the story of Hezekiah - **Kings** uses 3 **verses** to describe spiritual events and temple reform.

But **Chronicles** uses 3 **chapters**

1 Kings begins with the **building** of the temple **2 Kings** ends with the **burning** of that temple.

Chronicles goes beyond that. It begins with David's **desire** to build the temple; then describes its building, its burning and ends with permission to build a new temple.

For the Jews who have started over, they have a new book of religious history to help them focus on the temple and their spiritual life. It is their relationship to God that is the most important.



The complete exile in Babylon lasted for 70 years. This means that many of the Jews who returned to Judah were the children or grandchildren of those who were sent into exile.

Over the next 130 years, they rebuild their homes and build a new temple. 536-518 They repair the walls of Jerusalem. 445 There is great progress. But like their ancestors, they do not remain faithful to God. So God sends them prophets, a teacher and a godly governor to correct and guide them. For awhile they respond; but then they turn even further from God. They understand the message of the prophets, but they choose to reject it. So beginning in 400 BC, God does not send any more prophets. In fact, the Jews will not have another prophet until 30 AD when John the Baptist appears.

There are 400 silent years without any prophet. Some of the Jews will be glad - they can now live as they want. But others will seek God and need instruction. So in these 400 silent years, **the books of Chronicles will be their prophet**.

These books will **remind** them that disobedience bought heavy consequences to their ancestors in the past. The end of the book is the strongest reminder.

Yahweh sent word to them thru his messengers again and again...But they mocked God's messengers, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets until the response of Yahweh was aroused ...and there was no remedy. He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians...He carried to Babylon the articles from the temple of God...

They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned the palaces and destroyed everything of value... He carried into exile to Babylon those who escaped the sword,... until the kingdom of Persia came to power. 2 Chronicles 36:15-20.

Over the next 400 years, when all of God's prophets are silent, Chronicles will remind the new generations that disobedience brought exile to their ancestors in the past. Disobedience and defiance of God will have serious consequences for them in the present.

But like a prophet, this book will also **encourage** the Jewish remnant. The word *remnant* means those that follow God even when they are in the minority. God wants these faithful Jews to know His promises to past generations are still available to them.

In 2 Chronicles 6, Solomon had just finished building God's Temple. It was the 900's BC. He had a day of national dedication and prayer. Most of chapter 6 is his prayer. After giving praise and thanks to God, he begins his requests.

Verse 26. When Your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against You and when they turn back and confess Your name, praying and making supplication before You in this temple, then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of Your people Israel and bring them back to the land You gave to them and their fathers. 6:26-27

Verse 28-30. When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when enemies besiege them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come and when a prayer ...is made by any of Your people Israel...then hear from heaven...Forgive...so that they will fear You.

That night God gives an answer to Solomon's prayer.

The Lord appeared to him (Solomon) at night and said, 'I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a Temple for sacrifices. When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among My people, if my people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. I have chosen and consecrated this Temple so that My Name may be there forever. My eyes and My heart will always be there'. 7:12-16

Notice that verse 14 is a promise specifically for the Jewish people in regards to their land of Israel. God's agreements with the Jews were always based on the physical and their land.

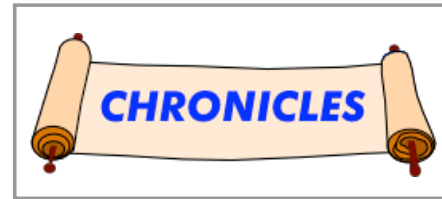
After Solomon died, over the next **400** years, the Jews did not listen to God and were taken into exile. Just after getting there, the books of **Kings** were put together, just for them. This account of Solomon, his prayer and God's reply were first written in the books of Kings. Over time, the Jews in exile took these words seriously. Daniel and others repented, faced the Temple and confessed the sin of the people as a nation and individually. God heard and forgave them. He healed or restored their land by bringing them out of exile and back to re-establish their nation in the 530's BC.

One hundred years go by and a new religious history is put together for these new generations. The story of Solomon, his prayer and God's response is now included in the books of **Chronicles**. It is repeated because history is going to repeat itself. There will be another **400** years – the 400 years of silence, when the majority of God's people do not listen. But for those who do listen and want to repent, they can be assured, *if they humble themselves and pray and seek His face and turn from their wicked ways, then He would hear from heaven, would forgive their sins and heal their land*, as He had in the past.

When Jesus came to this earth, He not only came to heal them spiritually. If the Jewish leadership had led the nation to accept Jesus as their Messiah, their land would also have been healed or restored. They would have been freed from Roman domination. Jesus would have died, risen again and returned to heaven. After 7 years He would have returned and set up His Kingdom. But with their national rejection, this prayer has not been fulfilled. However sometime in the future, the Jews as a nation will repent. Jesus will then return as their King to set up His Kingdom and their land will be healed. This promise will then be completely fulfilled.

The books of Chronicles are given to the Jews in Judah in the 400's BC:

- ▶ To update their family records
- ▶ To explain historical events
- ▶ To change their focus
- ▶ To give the history of Judah
- ▶ To remind them in the 400 silent years
- ▶ To encourage them with God's promises



The books of Kings and Chronicles reveal specific patterns and principles of how God works with nations.

Let me start with generalities.

From these books plus looking thruout all of history, we can see God always uses one nation to punish another. When a nation rejects the knowledge they have about God or becomes cruel and proud, He raises up another nation to bring her down. Sometimes it is thru war; other times it is thru economics or politics. When Gentile nations responded and wisely used what God gave them, He blessed them. When they became proud or excessively cruel, He brought them down.

That brings us to specifics – to the United States

Over the years, without realizing it, we believers sometimes think of ourselves and our country as a direct parallel to the Jews and their nation. But that is not true. America is not equal to Israel. God's promises to Israel are not for the United States.

God made unconditional and absolute promises about the Jews and about their land of Israel. He never made those kind of promises about any Gentile peoples or Gentile lands. The United States is not mentioned in Scripture. God has never guaranteed that our country will endure forever.

In fact, none of the Western world and their future is mentioned in Scripture. When it comes to nations, the Bible is about the Middle East. Its focus is on Israel and God's relationship with her – how He developed her, used her and how He will eventually restore her.

One reason why the *West* is not mentioned is explained in a quotation used frequently over the last 50 years. The author is unknown, but very observant.

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves largesse (generous gifts) from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates promising the most benefits from the public treasury. The result is that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy, which then is always followed by a dictatorship. ❁

Other writers have noted that all democracies only remain strong for about 200 years and then begin to deteriorate.

They discovered what the Bible has already told us. The sinful nature makes people naturally selfish. So in a democracy where the majority wins and the majority does not want God, the majority will be naturally selfish and the nation is doomed to fail. It is that basic and simple.

Yes, the United States had a very godly beginning. We started with Judeo-Christian principles, founded on the Bible. When we followed those principles, God abundantly blessed us and used us as a nation. But our nation has rejected its knowledge of God and has become proud, so God is going to use politics and economics to bring *us* down.

Automatically everyone turns to 2 Chronicles 7:14, saying if we follow that verse, God will make our nation great once again.

But that is a specific promise made **only** to the Jewish nation. It says if they repent, God will remove His punishment from the land of Israel. Because God guaranteed a physical land to the Jews, He also guaranteed to heal or restore it.

Having said that, there are **PRINCIPLES** in the verse that are also in the New Testament. They do apply to us.

God's people as a **nation** are and always will be the Jews.

But in the New Testament, the Church, His Body, is also called **God's people**.

However, please notice, we are not a nation. We are **individual** believers scattered thruout the world who are also *called by His name* – Christians, Christ-ones.

As **individuals** we are commanded in the New Testament to **humble ourselves, pray** and **seek** Him.

In the New Testament we are told that when we do, He will *hear* and *forgive our sin*.

In the New Testament we are also commanded to **pray for the country** we live in and for its **leaders**.

But never in the New Testament is there a promise that God will heal our land.

That is because God never gave any geographical land to the Church, His Body. Therefore we do not have any land for Him to heal or restore.

God's blessings for the Jews in the Old Testament was always based on the **physical for the nation**.

God's blessings for us, the Church is based on the **spiritual for the individual**.

Paul said, *He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies*.

That does not mean I am unconcerned about our nation. When issues are on the ballot, I will always vote my conscience. But in a democracy, until there are changed hearts of individuals, there cannot be changed values of society. At the moment, we are living in Satan's world. According to Scripture, this world is not going to get better.

God has not commanded us to save our country; He has commanded us to give His message to individuals. And there's a very logical reason. In order to save a country we would have to make laws that force people into certain behavior. But as we saw in our last lesson – Hezekiah and Josiah did make laws and did force people into obedience. However it did not bring true repentance. God said the people and leaders continued to practice deceit and do what they wanted.

Obedying God does not begin thru **outward** laws; it starts thru **inward** change of our desires and thinking. Obedience begins with a new heart. This comes thru the Gospel message that God has entrusted to us.

Can we change our nation? No, because God is following His pattern.

As a nation we have become proud; we have rejected our knowledge of God. So He is letting us reap the consequences of choices we have made, both nationally and individually.

Does that mean all is lost and everything is hopeless? Absolutely not

God wants to use *us* to share His message. But first we need to look at our own lives.

Are we living in obedience - within God's boundaries?

Do we know our Bible well enough to give God's answers when people start asking questions?

Does our life and attitudes show the difference that God has made in *our* life

If we can answer *yes*, then God will bring people across our path who are searching.

There are so many ways that God wants to use us to reach individuals. Our responsibility is very simple.

We are to keep growing in our knowledge of Him.

We are to obey in whatever He puts in front of us to do at the moment.

✿ Contrary to popular opinion, this is not a quote by Alexander Tytler, Scottish professor of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the University of Edinburgh in 1787. He never wrote a book *The Fall of the Athenian Republic*. However, he did write *Universal History – From the Creation of the World to the Beginning of the 18th Century*. In it, he gave *Political reflections arising from the history of Greece*, p. 216, Book 1, Chapter VI. He observes the weakness of democracy because a candidate is chosen by the masses for what he will give them and then is beholden to them in order to be re-elected. It leads to bribery and corruption. Because this is not true freedom, it will end in rebellion and a power grab.

EXTRA INFORMATION FOR THE STUDIOUS AND INQUISITIVE

In self-government, the historical cycle seems to be:

from bondage to spiritual faith

from spiritual faith to great courage

from courage to liberty

from liberty to abundance

from abundance to selfishness

from selfishness to apathy

from apathy to dependency

from dependency to bondage” (H.W. Prentis, 1943)