

The Ideal United Kingdom (1 Chronicles 9:35 – 2 Chronicles 9:31)

by Dr. Richard L. Pratt, Jr.

David Prepares for the Temple, part 11:
David Transfers Power and Responsibility to Solomon, part 4:
David's Final Assembly, part 3 – David's Third Speeches and
Actions; and Closure of David's Reign (1 Chronicles 29:10-30)

David's Third Speeches and Actions (29:10-25)

The third set of speeches and actions in David's final assembly brings this portion of the Chronicler's record to its climax. At this point, David turned his attention to God whose power undergirded his success in temple preparations. As we have noted on a number of occasions, the Chronicler believed strongly that God's power was behind the ideal actions of David (see 10:13-14; 11:3,9-10,14; 12:18,23; 14:2; see also *Introduction: 10) Divine Activity*). Through David's final addresses to God and the assembly the Chronicler brought this perspective to the foreground.

David Addresses God (29:10-19)

David's last praise has a number of thematic connections with his praise in the closure of the previous major section of his reign (see 16:8-36). Both praises call attention to the patriarchs (29:10,18 compare 16:16); they both mention the motif of Israel being **strangers** (29:15 compare 16:19); the kingship of God is celebrated (29:11-12 compare 16:22-23); both praises end with petitions (29:18-19 compare 16:35). The Chronicler established these similarities to connect these closing scenes. 16:8-36 closes David's successful transfer of the ark to Jerusalem; 29:10-19 brings to an end David's preparations for temple construction and the transfer of power to Solomon.

Structure of 29:10-19

This material begins with a brief setting followed by a three part address to God (see figure 16). The progress of thought in this passage is evident. After a description of the situation (29:10a), David began with an elaborate praise of God as the one who rules

over all (29:10b-13). He then acknowledged the contrast between his own humble state and divine sufficiency (29:14-16). Finally, David closed this address to his all-sufficient God with a petition for the future of the nation (29:17-19).

Setting (29:10a)

David turned to God **in the presence of the whole assembly** (29:10a) to offer praise for the accomplishments of his life and to ask for divine blessings on future generations. Once again, the Chronicler noted the exemplary character of this event by designating it as an **assembly** (see *Introduction: 5) Religious Assemblies*).

Praise of God (29:10b-13)

David began this speech with a series of praises to God. These praises are divided by four vocatives: (**O Lord** [29:10b], **O Lord** [29:11a], **O Lord** [29:11d], and **our God** [29:13]).

The first portion of this passage acknowledges that God is to be praised **from everlasting to everlasting** (29:10b). David displayed his enthusiasm for what God had done in his life by immediately acknowledging that he deserved eternal praise far beyond that which David was able to give.

Following this initial acknowledgment, David explained why God deserved unending praise (29:11a-c). To him belong **greatness, power, glory, majesty, and splendor** (29:11a-b). The piling up of these terms revealed David's enthusiasm. He was impressed by what God had done and proclaimed that **everything in heaven and earth** belongs to God (29:11c). Similar themes appear in the Psalms when the psalmists reached the limits of their expressive powers.

The motif of divine sovereignty continued in the next portion of David's praise (29:11d-e). In this regard, **the kingdom** takes center stage (29:11d). Time and again the Chronicler drew attention to the connection between God's throne and the throne of Israel's kings (see *Introduction: 8) Divine Kingship*). The kings of Israel ruled as God's vice-regents over the land of Israel, but God himself is **head over all** (29:11e); God is the **ruler of all things** (29:12b). As a result, whenever **wealth and honor** (29:12a) come to a nation or king, they **come from** [the Lord] (29:12a). God alone is able **to exalt and give strength** (29:12c-d). Here David's words revealed the Chronicler's perspective that prosperity and strength for faithful Israelites comes from God (see *Introduction: 26) Prosperity and Poverty*).

In response to the blessings David had received, he closed his initial praise with an expression of **thanks** to God (29:13a). He praised God's **glorious name** (29:13b), the invocable, active power of God in the world (see *Introduction: 11) Name of God*). David had seen God act on his behalf throughout his life. The Name of God deserved his praise.

Declaration of Humility (29:14-16)

David's amazement with God was also rooted in his recognition of human impotence. In a rhetorical question, he acknowledged that it is only because of God's enablement that he and the nation were **able to give as generously as this** (29:14). Both David and the people had contributed much to the construction of Solomon's temple (see 29:2-9). It would have been natural to take credit for these contributions, but David praised God for them. As he put it, "**everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand**" (29:14). The assembly's generosity toward the temple was merely returning a small portion of what they had received from God.

To highlight this perspective, David described himself and Israel as **aliens and strangers** (29:15). This terminology usually applied to those who were homeless or traveling and who depended entirely on the goodness of others for their sustenance (see Dt 10:18). Although David and his people had inherited the land of promise by this time, he still considered himself in utter dependence on God. This dependence was not on other people for David was a stranger "**in your [the Lord's] sight**" (29:14). Despite the security David experienced in the land of Israel, he and his people still depended on God just as much as their **forefathers**, those who first wandered through the land (29:14 see Gen 12:1-3; Dt 26:5).

Having acknowledged Israel's utter dependence on God, David once again admitted that the provision made for the **temple for [God's] Holy Name comes from [God's] hand and all of it belongs to [God]** (29:16; see *Introduction: 11) Name of God*). These words recall the earlier expression of humility before God (29:14b) and the praise of his Name (29:13b).

Petitions for the Future (29:17-19)

The final portion of David's address to God concerned the future of the kingdom, especially future devotion to the temple project. David began with a doctrinal statement acknowledging an important theological conviction. "**I know,**" he affirmed, "**that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity**" (29:17). These words recalled David's earlier charge to Solomon (see 28:9) and brought forward the central concern of his petitions. David wanted the nation and his son to serve God from the heart. God required obedience

to his Law that rose out of a wholehearted commitment. Mere outward or reluctant service was not adequate (see *Introduction: 16) Motivations*).

David quickly affirmed that his royal contributions and the donations of the people had been wholehearted. He asserted that he had **given willingly and with honest intent** (29:17). **Honest intent** meant that David supported temple construction precisely for the reasons he stated. He desired for God to have a temple for his Name. No ulterior motives such as self-aggrandizement were behind his actions.

Moreover, as the earlier portion of this chapter demonstrated, David gave far beyond what was required of him (see 29:3), and the assembly had done the same. They gave **with joy** and **willingly** (29:9; see *Introduction: 27) Disappointment and Celebration*). As the Chronicler already noted, the assembly rejoiced because of the **willing** responses of the leaders of the nation (29:9). They saw that the gifts were given **freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord** (29:9; see *Introduction: 16) Motivations*). David therefore affirmed that he and the nation had passed God's test of their hearts (see 29:17d).

David then turned to a series of petitions concerning the future of the nation and her king. First, David asked God to **keep this desire in the hearts** of Israel **forever** (29:18). In other words, David wanted future generations to be enthusiastic about temple support. Mere outward obedience would not be sufficient; joyous wholehearted devotion would be required by a God who tests the hearts of his people (see 29:17). David prayed that the people would **keep their hearts loyal** to God (29:18; see *Introduction: 16) Motivations*).

Second, just as David commented on his own royal integrity, he prayed that Solomon would have **wholehearted devotion** (29:19). Solomon was to observe the Law of God and **to do everything to build the palatial structure** (i.e. the temple [see 29:1]). The task ahead of David's son was massive. Only actions rising out of deep inward devotion would be sufficient to carry him through the project.

Undoubtedly, the Chronicler included this aspect of David's prayer to encourage his post-exilic readers to consider their own hearts. They were one of the future generations for which David prayed. In line with their ideal king's desire, they should have been wholeheartedly devoted to the temple in their day. Moreover, in line with their ideal king's practice, they should have devoted themselves to prayerful humility before God (see *Introduction: 17) Prayer*).

David Addresses Assembly (29:20)

The Chronicler briefly noted that David not only praised God himself. He also turned **to the whole assembly** and encouraged them to **praise the Lord** (29:20). As a result, the entire assembly **praised the Lord ... bowed low and fell prostrate before the Lord and the king** (29:20). All the people in attendance acknowledged the goodness of God toward them and honored David as their national head. The meeting is designated an **assembly** once again (see 29:1,10) to highlight its exemplary quality for the Chronicler's readers (see *Introduction: 5) Religious Assemblies*). This brief scene depicted the entire assembly of Israel in the worship of God and in harmony with the Davidic king. The Chronicler could hardly have imagined a more ideal scene for his post-exilic readers (see *Introduction: 4-9) King and Temple*).

Actions Following Speeches (29:21-25)

With the assembly fully devoted to the task of constructing the temple, David and the people of Israel assembled **the next day** to make Solomon their king. This material divides into two sections: preparations (29:21-22a), and the acknowledgment of Solomon (29:22b-25).

The Chronicler pointed to the religious nature of the transfer of power from David to Solomon by noting joyous sacrificial ceremonies that preceded the actual transfer (29:21-22a). The assembly offered **burnt offerings** which included **a thousand bulls, rams, and male lambs** (29:21). In addition to the burnt offerings, **drink offerings** were also made (29:21). Moreover there were **other sacrifices**, probably peace or fellowship offerings, portions of which were eaten by the celebrants (29:21). To emphasize the national unity at this event, the Chronicler noted that these sacrifices were made on behalf of **all Israel** (29:21 see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*). Just as David had found support from the entire nation, the transfer of power to Solomon was now supported by all the people (see 29:25).

Beyond this, the Chronicler also noted that the assembly **ate and drank with great joy** (29:22a). Eating in celebration occurred three times in David's reign: his anointing (12:39-40), the transfer of the ark (16:23-33) and here. By repeating this motif, the Chronicler highlighted the splendor of the event. It was a joyous time for the nation because her new king was about to be acknowledged and all preparations were complete for the construction of the temple.

The Chronicler sought to inspire his post-exilic readers to yearn for the same joy in their day. As they wholeheartedly devoted themselves to setting the royal family and the

temple in order, they could also enjoy the celebration of David's day (see *Introduction: 27) Disappointment and Celebration*).

In the end the assembly **acknowledged Solomon ... as king** (29:22b). The traditional Hebrew text of 29:22b reads that at this time Solomon was anointed king **a second time**. A few textual witnesses omit this phrase and raise the possibility that it was added at some point in the history of transmission (see *Introduction: Translation and Transmission*). If the reading originated with the Chronicler, he probably noted this fact to distinguish the relatively private ceremony (see 1 Kgs 1:29-31) from this public ceremony (see 1 Kgs 1:38-42).

The Chronicler noted that the assembly also **acknowledged ... Zadok to be priest** (29:22). Kings reports that Zadok anointed Solomon (see 1 Kgs 1:39). Zadok's special status was especially important to the Chronicler and his readers. The Zadokite priest, Joshua, joined Zerubbabel in the restoration of the temple in the early days of the restoration (see 6:1-81; Ezr 2:2). Like Zechariah, the Chronicler insisted that Israel's restoration depended on two figures: the Davidic king and the Zadokite high priest (see Zech 1-4).

This event closes with the results of Solomon's anointing (29:23-25). It reports three characteristics of Solomon's kingdom. 1) Solomon **prospered** (29:23). The theme of prosperity and wealth appears many times in Chronicles to indicate divine blessing toward a faithful king (see *Introduction: 26) Prosperity and Poverty*). 2) Solomon **was highly exalted** (29:25); exaltation also indicated God's approval of a king. 3) Solomon received **royal splendor such as no king over Israel ever had before** (29:25); this description anticipated Solomon's blessing at Gibeon (see 2 Chr 1:12).

Beyond this, the ideal quality of Solomon's reign also appears in the broad support he received. 1) The Chronicler specified that **all Israel obeyed him** (29:23) and **all Israel** realized Solomon's exaltation (29:25). The entire nation submitted to Solomon's rule (see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*). 2) **All the officers and mighty men as well as all of King David's sons** swore to support Solomon (29:24). These words stressed the continuity between David and Solomon.

With these words the Chronicler created the expectation in his readers that Solomon's kingdom was as ideal as David's. As the following chapters will indicate, Solomon also served as an ideal for the post-exilic community.

Closure of David's Reign (29:26-30)

The information of 29:26-27 follows 1 Kgs 2:10-11 very closely. The remainder of this material comes from the Chronicler's hand.

The Chronicler finalized his record of David's reign in a manner similar to that which he will follow at the end of nearly every other king's reign after this point. He summarized David's reign (29:26-28a), noted his successor (29:28b), and pointed to other records of the king's life (29:29-30).

Above all, in these last comments on David the Chronicler reminded his readers of his overarching assessment of the king. David ruled **over all Israel** (29:26); his reign extended to all the tribes (see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*). The Chronicler added that David was blessed by God with **good old age and long life** (29:28). In line with earlier biblical traditions David received the blessing of a lengthy reign and life because of his uprightness (see Ex 20:12; Dt 6:2; 22:7; 1 Sam 17:12; 2 Kgs 20:6; see *Introduction: 28) Healing and Long Life / Sickness and Death*). Other righteous kings share this blessing as well (see 2 Chr 24:15; 32:24-26; 33:1; but compare 33:21). David is also said to have died with **wealth and honor** (29:28). David's prosperity exalted him as an ideal for the post-exilic readers to follow (see *Introduction: 26) Prosperity and Poverty*).

Finally, the Chronicler noted several sources he used for the history of David besides the canonical book of Samuel (see: *Introduction: Historical and Theological Purposes*). He mentioned **the records of Samuel the seer** (not to be confused with the canonical book of Samuel), **Nathan**, and **Gad** (29:29). These prophetic books no longer exist, but they contained many **details of his reign and power** as well as other **circumstances in Israel and the kingdoms of other lands** (29:30). The Chronicler's reference to these prophetic sources indicated the important role the prophetic word played in his evaluation of Israel's history (see *Introduction: 15) Prophets*).