

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

by Dr. Richard L. Pratt, Jr.

David Prepares for the Temple, part 9:
David Transfers Power and Responsibility to Solomon, part 2:
David's Final Assembly, part 1 – Overview; and
David's First Speech and Action (1 Chronicles 28:1-19)

David's Final Assembly (28:1-29:25)

Having described the breadth of people David assembled for Solomon's coronation (23:2-27:34), the Chronicler turned to the activities of the assembly itself. This gathering of Israel's leaders finalized the transfer of temple responsibilities and royal power from David to Solomon.

Comparison of 28:1-29:25 with Samuel and Kings

This material does not appear in Samuel or Kings. The Chronicler added this record to highlight the continuity between David and Solomon's reigns and to close David's reign on a crescendo of joy and celebration.

Structure of 28:1-29:25

The account of David's final assembly divides into three main parts (see figure 16). It is introduced by a single verse (28:1). The three following sections reveal several intentional symmetries (28:2-29:25). They all portray David in the dramatic mode of speaking. Then they follow his speeches with straight narration of action. David first focused on the assembly (28:2-7). Then he narrowed attention to Solomon before (28:8-10) and after (28:20-21) giving him the plans for the temple (28:11-19). Third, he returned to a concern with the assembly (29:1-5). The Chronicler then focused on David's joyous address to God (29:10-19) and the assembly (29:20) and closed with the assembly's acknowledgment of Solomon as king (29:21-25).

David Assembles Leaders (28:1)

The Chronicler began this passage by drawing a connection between what follows and what has preceded. Many members of the groups mentioned here also appeared in 23:2-27:34. As we have noted, however, other groups also attended the assembly. They appear at various stages in the actions of the assembly.

Moreover, David called the people **to assemble** (28:1). This designation of the event as a religious assembly sets it on par with similar occurrences in the Chronicler's history. David's assembly here illustrated the importance of such assemblies in the post-exilic period (see *Introduction: 5) Religious Assemblies*).

David's First Speech and Action (28:2-19)

David's first speech has many parallels with his earlier speech in 22:2-19. In that passage David announced his intention to hand the kingdom to Solomon. At this point, he told the assembly it was time to complete the transfer of temple responsibilities and royal power to Solomon. This speech divides into two parts (see figure 16): David's words to the assembly (28:2-7) and his words to Solomon (28:8-10).

David's Speech to the Assembly (28:2-7)

David began his first speech with a strong assertion of humility before the assembly. He addressed those in attendance as "**my brothers**" (28:2). This designation revealed David's humble attitude toward the nation by alluding to Moses' description of Israel's king (see Deut 17:20). He considered himself one with the nation in service to God. David also addressed the assembly as **my people** to indicate familial affection for the nation (28:2; see Ruth 1:16; 2 Chr 2:11; Isa 40:1).

David first explained what had led to this event. He reminded the assembly how he had wanted to build the temple (28:2). As we noted earlier, David's desire to build a temple for his God was typical for king's in the ancient Near East; successful kings often boasted of their temple construction (see 17:1).

David often called the ark by the traditional terminology, **the ark of the covenant** (28:2). (For the significance of this designation see *Introduction: 13) Covenant*.) Yet, here he called the ark **the footstool of our God** (28:2). This designation rarely appears explicitly in the Old Testament (Ps 99:5; 132:7). David conceived of the ark as God's royal footstool which needed a temple-palace in which to rest.

Despite David's desire, God forbade him to construct the temple for his **Name** (see *Introduction: 11) Name of God*) because he was a **warrior** who **shed blood** (28:3). For a second time the Chronicler explained why David did not build the temple (see comments on 22:6-10). According to the Mosaic Law, the permanent placement of the presence of God was to take place only after the conquest of the land was complete. David had spent most of his life fighting enemies within the land. It was inappropriate for God to take residence in his palace so long as warfare was the course of the day. Only when the people of God had peace was the God of the people going to rest in his palace.

David continued to explain that despite the directive not to build, God favored his descendants with the project (28:4-7). He noted that his kingship was divinely ordained. Judah had been chosen out of all the tribes. His family was selected out of all of Judah. He was chosen out of all his father's house.

Moreover, David announced that God had **chosen** [his] **son Solomon to sit on the throne** (28:5). This statement suggests that this assembly took place after 1 Kgs 1:15-21, when Bathsheba asked David to announce Solomon's right to the throne. In the Chronicler's presentation, Solomon's right was never seriously challenged.

God had told David, "**I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father**" (28:6). This language of royal adoption recalls the earlier promise of God in 17:13. Solomon was a special child of God, but his relationship was not void of conditions. The blessings of David's family were dependent on their fidelity to God's Law (2 Sam 7:14-16 // 1 Chr 17:15-17; Ps 89:30-34; 132:12). God would **establish** (Solomon's) **kingdom forever**, but Solomon's line will succeed only if **he is unswerving** (28:7).

David Addresses Solomon (28:8-10)

After mentioning the conditional nature of the blessings offered to Solomon, David shifted attention away from the assembly to Solomon himself (28:8-10). Before the **assembly of the Lord** representing **all Israel** (28:8), the king gave a number of directives to Solomon. Once again, the term **assembly** heightened the importance of this event as a religious gathering (see *Introduction: 5) Religious Assemblies*). Six imperatives introduce David's directives to Solomon: **be careful** (28:8), **acknowledge** (28:9), **serve** (28:9), **consider** (28:10), **be strong** (28:10), and **do the work** (28:10).

First, David ordered his son to **be careful to follow all the commands** (28:8). These words alluded to God's commission to Joshua after the death of Moses (see Josh 1:7). The Chronicler pointed to the parallel between Joshua and Solomon earlier (see 22:11-16). Similar allusions to Joshua's commission appear at several points in this

material (28:1-10). As Joshua completed Moses' work, so Solomon must complete David's work.

David's call to obey the Mosaic Law was followed by motivational words. Why should the young king Solomon concern himself with the Law? His obedience will determine the quality of his own life (... **you may possess** ...) and future generations (... **and pass it on** ...) (28:8).

Second, David decreed that Solomon should **acknowledge the God of [his] father** (28:9). From ancient Near Eastern texts outside of Scripture, we learn that "knowing" or "acknowledging" often meant to accept the binding of covenant stipulations as a vassal (compare Amos 3:2; 2 Sam 7:20 // 1 Chr 17:18; Hos 8:2; 13:4-5; Deut 9:24; Ps 14:4). Therefore, David told Solomon to devote himself enthusiastically to the covenant stipulations. Just as Jeremiah looked forward to a day when the exiled people would be restored to their covenant fidelity (see Jer 31:31-34), so the Chronicler reported these words of David to encourage his post-exilic readers to renew themselves in covenant faithfulness (see *Introduction: 13) Covenant*).

Third, David told Solomon to **serve** (28:9). In Chronicles this terminology frequently has overtones of service in worship (see 2 Chr 24:18; 30:8; 33:16; 34:33; 35:3). It is likely that this command focused primarily on the task of constructing and arranging the temple. Even so, Solomon was not merely to live in external conformity to this decree. He was to serve with **whole hearted devotion** and **willing mind** (28:9). The requirement of sincere inward devotion from the heart appears frequently in Chronicles (see *Introduction: 16) Motivations*).

The reason for David's insistence on sincere devotion was that God **searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts** (28:9). Divine omniscience served as a reason to obey out of proper motivations (compare Ps 7:10; 139:1; 1 Sam 16:7; Jer 11:20). In the ancient Near East, kings often boasted of their temple buildings. Propagandistic inscriptions honored kings for these accomplishments. Solomon could easily have constructed a temple in Jerusalem for his own self-aggrandizement. David warned him, however, that God knew his motivations.

To indicate the importance of building with proper motives, David also reminded Solomon of divine blessings and curses (see *Introduction: 10) Divine Activity*). He warned, "**If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever**" (28:9). Nearly the same words appear in Azariah's prophetic instruction to Asa (see 2 Chr 15:2b). The term **seek** connoted an intense pursuit of God's favor (see *Introduction: 19) Seeking*). To **forsake** is to do the opposite of "seeking." To **forsake** God was to violate the covenant by finding help in someone other than the Lord (see *Introduction: 22) Abandoning/Forsaking*). David warned Solomon that failure to

serve with sincerity can lead to divine wrath. It was even possible that God would **reject** [him] **forever** (28:9).

Fourth, David told Solomon to **consider** (28:10), or give due thought to a particular facet of his life's work. Solomon was to build **a temple as a sanctuary**, a holy place for God (28:10). Solomon's temple was for the honor of Israel's divine king, and not for her human king. Solomon had to remember this goal as he constructed the temple in Jerusalem.

The fifth and sixth imperatives are closely related and close David's words to his son. **Be strong and do the work** (28:10). David has already acknowledged that temple construction was not an easy task (see 22:5). For this reason, he exhorted Solomon to be diligent. Similar language will appear again the next time David speaks to Solomon (see 28:20). This phraseology is also present in God's encouragement to Joshua after the death of Moses (Josh 1:6,7,9) and draws attention once again to the similarities between the roles of Joshua and Solomon (see 22:11-16; see also 19:13; 28:20; 2 Chr 15:7; 32:7).

Actions Following First Speeches (28:11-19)

After his first speech, David gave **the plans** for the temple to Solomon (28:11). The term **plans** recalls Ex 25:9,10 where Moses' tabernacle followed a plan (or "pattern" [NIV]) of the heavenly dwelling of God. Ezekiel had similar "plans" for the temple of the post-exilic community (see Ezek 40:45-48; 41:5-14; 43:10). The Chronicler used this term four times (see 28:11,12,18b,19) to indicate the main divisions of this material.

The first portion (28:11) of David's **plans** concerned the actual edifice of the temple proper (28:11). For a fuller discussion of these aspects of the temple plan see *Introduction: Appendix B - Structures, Furnishings and Decorations of Solomon's Temple*.

The second portion (28:12-18a) of David's **plans** related to **the courts of the temple** and the various **treasuries** of the temple complex (28:12). The **courts** and **treasuries** (28:12) were closely associated with the **divisions of the priests and Levites** (28:13) because they did much of their work in these areas. Moreover, the Chronicler noted **articles to be used in various kinds of service** (28:13). David established the weights of the various gold and silver furnishings and instruments to be used by priests and Levites (28:13-18a).

It is instructive to note that although the Chronicler believed that all of David's plans came from God, he specified that **the Spirit had put** these Levitical divisions in David's **mind** (28:12). This special notice of the divine origins of David's plans explained why the Chronicler set the instructions of David alongside the Law of Moses as his

principal standards (see *Introduction: 14 Standards*). The Chronicler made this special notice of the Spirit's work to authorize David's plans for his own day. For a summary of the Chronicler's outlook on the Spirit see comments on 1 Chr 12:18.

The third portion (28:18b) of David's plan related to **the chariot, that is, ... the ark of the covenant** (28:18b). Once again, the Chronicler used the well-known designation **ark of the covenant** (28:18b), but he also referred to it as God's mobile **chariot** (28:18b). This imagery appears only here in Chronicles and refers to the ark as the place of God's presence in battle; the ark represented the chariot of God on which he went into battle (see Nu 10:33-36; 2 Kgs 2:11; Ps 18:10; 68:17; 104:3,4; 132:10-14; Isa 66:15; Hab 3:8; Zech 6:1).

The Chronicler closed this portion of his record by noting David's reflection on his plan. The king said, "**All this, I have in writing from the hand of the Lord upon me**" (28:19). David explicitly attributed his instructions to God, but he also made it clear that God himself had not written the plans. David wrote them by the hand of God on him. This statement is one of the clearest expressions in the Old Testament of the manner in which divine inspiration took place. It lies behind the New Testament conviction that "all Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Tim 3:16).

The divine authorization of David's temple plan was vital to the Chronicler's purposes. His post-exilic readers were obligated to follow the Davidic order for the temple because God authorized his plans (see *Introduction: 14 Standards*).