

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

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<p>The Reign of Solomon, part 10: More on Solomon's International Relations; Closure of Solomon's Reign (2 Chronicles 9:22-31)</p>

More on Solomon's Great Wisdom and Wealth (9:22-28)

At this point, the Chronicler's division of his material is obscured by the fact that he continued to follow the book of Kings (// 1Kgs 10:23-29). Nevertheless, it seems best in light of his broad chiasmic structure to see this portion as a move to another section (see figure 22). These verses are held together by the repeated expression **all the kings** (9:22,23,26) which the Chronicler introduced each time into this passage.

Comparison with 1 Kgs 10:23-29

Two observations are important for understanding the Chronicler's use of this passage. First, these verses result from a combination of different portions of the record of Kings. The Chronicler followed 1 Kgs 10:23-25 (// 9:23-24) to which he attached his version of 1 Kgs 10:26-29 (// 9:25,27-28). This latter portion, however, is interrupted at 9:26 by an insertion from 1 Kgs 4:21.

Second, three changes reflect the panoramic perspective that the Chronicler emphasized in this material. He changed "the whole world" (1 Kgs 10:24) to **all the kings of the earth** (9:23). He shifted from "over all the kingdoms" (1 Kgs 4:21) to **all the kings** (9:26). These changes correspond to **all the other kings of the earth** (9:22) which he copied from 1 Kgs 10:23. A third change occurs in the last sentence of this section. "From Egypt and from Kue" (1 Kgs 10:28) is changed to **from Egypt and from all other countries** (9:28) to emphasize the grandeur of Solomon's exaltation.

Structure of 9:22-28

This short passage divides into three parts (see figure 23). It begins with an introductory title indicating Solomon's superiority over all other kings (9:22). It then moves to

two illustrations of that superiority: the recognition of his wisdom by other kings (9:23-24) and his worldwide imports (9:25-28).

Introduction (9:22)

The Chronicler adopted 1 Kgs 10:23 as a title for this section. Solomon was superior in **riches and wisdom to all the other kings of the earth** (9:22). God had promised Solomon would receive **wealth, riches and honor** beyond any king before and after him (1:12). As he introduced his finale to Solomon's reign, the Chronicler wanted his readers to know that God had kept his promise to Solomon. He expressed this by means of a hyperbole making Solomon richer than any other king before or after him. (For the Chronicler's use of hyperbole see comments on 12:14.) Solomon's wealth demonstrates that his kingdom was blessed by God and rightly served as a model for the post-exilic readers (see *Introduction: 26) Prosperity and Poverty*).

Solomon's Worldwide Recognition (9:23-24)

The Chronicler supported his perspective on Solomon by focusing on his international recognition. The queen of Sheba was not alone in her desire to visit Solomon. In an extreme hyperbole, the Chronicler wrote that **all the kings of the earth sought audience** (9:23). (For the Chronicler's use of hyperbole see comments on 12:14.) They all wanted to hear for themselves this **wisdom God had put in his heart** (9:23). Again, the allusion to 1:1-12 is evident. God's fulfillment of his promise to Solomon was recognized by the whole world. In addition to acknowledging Solomon's wisdom, every king also contributed to Solomon's wealth **year after year** (9:24).

Solomon's Worldwide Imports (9:25-28)

The second support given to the idea that Solomon received incomparable wisdom and riches (see 9:22) was his international trade. In these four verses, the Chronicler drew together materials from 1 Kgs 10:26 (// 9:25), 1 Kgs 4:21 (// 9:26), and 1 Kgs 10:27-28 (// 9:27-28). The materials of 9:25,27-28 are duplicated from 1:14-17. They are repeated here to point to the balance this passage has with the opening of Solomon's reign.

The insertion of 9:26 (// 1 Kgs 4:21) explains how Solomon managed to reach this height of glory. Solomon's riches were immense because he **ruled over all the kings from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt** (9:26). Solomon had enormous numbers of **horses and chariots** (9:25) and brought prosperity to Jerusalem (9:27). In the last verse of this section, the Chronicler varied "from Egypt and Kue" (1 Kgs 4:21 and

1 Chr 1:16) to **from Egypt and from all other countries** (9:28). The purpose of this change is apparent. Solomon's supremacy over the vast territories mentioned in 9:26 was the source of his incomparable riches.

Solomon's worldwide imports spoke directly to the needs of the post-exilic readers. As they struggled with economic hardship, the memory of Solomon's territorial and commercial successes inspired them to hope for the same. The Chronicler's message to them was straightforward. Only if they followed the example of Solomon, could they see the same results of riches and blessings in their day.

Closure of Solomon's Reign (9:29-31)

The Chronicler ended his account of Solomon's reign by indicating the honor afforded to Solomon in his death and burial. He also noted his literary sources.

Comparison with 1 Kgs 11:41-43

The Chronicler relied on Kings for the basic format of this material. Two aspects of his account should be noted.

First, it is important to point out that the Chronicler omitted a large segment of Kings (1 Kgs 11:1-40; see figure 21). This portion of Kings reports Solomon's failures and the resulting trouble in his kingdom. The Chronicler's purpose in omitting these materials was not to deny Solomon's failures, but to create an ideal model for his post-exilic readers. For this reason, Chronicles moves directly from Solomon's worldwide fame to the notice of his death.

Second, the Chronicler added references to a number of the literary sources he used beyond those mentioned in the book of Kings (9:29). He mentioned **the records of Nathan ... Ahijah ... and the visions of Iddo** (9:29). Nathan's records were mentioned earlier (1 Chr 29:29). **Ahijah** is the prophet who condemned Solomon for his failures (see 1 Kgs 11:29-39). **Iddo** appears in 12:15; 13:22. These books are no longer extant, but probably contained stories and prophecies much like the biblical prophetic books. The Chronicler's reliance on these sources demonstrated his affinities toward the office of prophet (see *Introduction: 15 Prophets*).

To close out his record of Solomon, the Chronicler mentioned two facts. First, Solomon reigned forty years over **all Israel** (9:30). Although these words appear in 1 Kgs 11:42, they reiterate the Chronicler's interest in the unity of the nation under Solomon (see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*). Second, in typical fashion, the Chronicler revealed his overarching assessment of Solomon's reign. His burial report mentions that Solomon was buried in the city of David (9:31). Thus, Solomon was honored as one of

Israel's greatest kings (see *Introduction: 28) Healing and Long Life/Sickness and Death*). From beginning to end, the Chronicler presented Solomon as a royal ideal.