

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

by Dr. Richard L. Pratt, Jr.

Introduction; David's Ideal Reign, part 1: David Becomes King: Divine Transfer from Saul to David (1 Chronicles 9:35-10:14)
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Overview of the United Kingdom

Having provided records to identify and establish the privileges and responsibilities of post-exilic Israel (1:1-9:34), the Chronicler shifted attention to the history of Israel's kings. The first segment of this record deals with the United Kingdom (9:35-2 Chr 9:31) which consists of the reigns of David (9:35-29:30) and Solomon (2 Chr 1:1-9:31).

A significant change in style takes place as we enter this portion of Chronicles. Up to this point, just a few pages have covered millennia. Less than ten chapters summarize the entire time from Adam to the post-exilic period. By contrast, this material slows considerably and gives much more attention to detail. This change reflects the importance of Israel's royal history to the Chronicler.

Interpreters have a great advantage as they explore the United Kingdom because the Chronicler began to depend heavily on the books of Samuel and Kings. By comparing his record with these books, the Chronicler's unique outlooks emerge (see *Introduction: Historical and Theological Purposes*). In very broad terms, comparisons reveal that he described the United Kingdom as an ideal time. The books of Samuel and Kings present balanced portraits of David and Solomon; both kings received blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. By and large, however, the Chronicler omitted the failures of David and Solomon (see 13:7-11; 14:3; 21:1-6; 2 Chr 8:11). Instead, he focused on their positive characteristics and accomplishments to present striking ideals for his post-exilic readers.

As our comments below will demonstrate, David and Solomon were ideals in at least four main ways. 1) Both kings displayed outstanding moral character; 2) the nation of Israel united with enthusiastic support for both kings; 3) both kings were fully devoted to proper worship and temple construction; 4) Israel experienced times of joyous celebration under both kings.

These four themes both encouraged and challenged the original Israelite readers. On the one hand, the post-exilic community could gain hope from this ideal period that God would

bless them in similar ways. Their national heritage reached back to David and Solomon who received enduring covenant promises from God (see *Introduction: 13) Covenant*). The original readers of Chronicles were heirs of these promises. On the other hand, David and Solomon's reigns also depicted responsibilities for post-exilic Israel. If they wanted to secure divine blessing in their day, they had to imitate the positive accomplishments of these kings. God's favor would appear only as post-exilic Israel followed the patterns of the ideal United Kingdom.

Overview of David's Reign

1 Chr 9:35-29:30

Israel's monarchy found its true beginning with David. His anointing marked the beginning of Israel's permanent dynasty. For this reason, David's accomplishments had many implications for the readers of Chronicles.

Comparison of 9:35-29:30 with 2 Samuel 1:1-24:25

2 Samuel conveys David's life in three main sections: his early years of fidelity and blessing (2 Sam 1-10), his later years of infidelity and curse (2 Sam 11-20), and a final summation of his reign (2 Sam 21-24). This evenhanded portrait, however, does not appear in Chronicles.

The Chronicler's outlook on David consisted of four major themes. These emphases become evident in a number of major variations between Samuel and Chronicles (see figure 9).

<i>David Becomes King</i> (1.9:35-12:40)		<i>David Becomes King</i> (1 Sam 9:1-2 Sam 4:12)
Saul's Genealogy (1.9:35-44)	added	-----
-----	omitted	David Struggles with Saul (1 Sam 9:1-30:30)
Saul Killed by Philistines (1.10:1- 14)	parallel	Saul Killed by Philistines (1 Sam 31:1-13)
-----	omitted	David Struggles with Saulides (2 Sam 1:1-4:12)
David Acknowledged as King (1.11:1-3)	parallel	David Acknowledged as King (2 Sam 5:1-5)
David Conquers Jerusalem (1.11:4-9)	parallel	David Conquers Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:6-10)
David's Warriors (11:10-41)	added	David's Warriors (2 Sam 23:8-39)
David's Other Supporters (12:1-40)		-----

Comparison of 1 Chr 9:35-12:40 and 1 Sam and 2 Sam (figure 9)

First, the Chronicler presented David's positive moral character by omitting several significant portions of the book of Samuel. 1) He omitted Michal's reproach of David (2 Sam 6:20b-23). 2) He also avoided David's troublesome reception of Mephibosheth into the royal court (2 Sam 9:1-13). 3) Most pointedly, he chose not to repeat the account of David's adultery and ensuing troubles within the royal household (2 Sam 11:1-21:14). The Chronicler

knew that his readers were familiar with David's sins. Yet, he chose not to repeat most of them in his record in order to emphasize the positive moral character of the king.

Second, the Chronicler also highlighted the breadth of David's support. In this history, all the tribes of Israel enthusiastically endorsed David as their king. This motif falls in line with the focus of the lists and genealogies of 1:1-9:34 on all the tribes of Israel. In David's reign a similar theme appears in several additions. 1) With the exception of 1 Chr 10:1-12 (// 1 Sam 31:1-13), the checkered history leading to David's rise is omitted (1 Sam 1:1-2 Sam 4:12). 2) The Chronicler added long lists of David's followers from all the tribes of Israel (1 Chr 12:1-40). 3) He introduced the account of the entry of the ark into Jerusalem with an indication of widespread support (1 Chr 13:1-4). 4) The same theme also occurs in the repeated use of the terminology "all Israel" (1 Chr 11:1,10 // 2 Sam 5:1; 1 Chr 11:4 // 2 Sam 5:6; 1 Chr 13:6 // 2 Sam 6:2; 1 Chr 14:8 // 2 Sam 5:17). These changes stressed that David reigned with the enthusiastic support of the vast majority of the nation. The Chronicler focused on these matters to encourage his readers to hope and work for the reunification of all Israel under the reign of a son of David in their day as well (see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*).

Third, the most significant dimension of the Chronicler's portrait is David's commitment to the temple. This theme appears in a number of ways. 1) David devoted the spoils of battle for use in the temple (1 Chr 18:8 // 2 Sam 8:8). 2) Beyond this, eight chapters not found in Samuel focus exclusively on the king's enthusiastic work in preparation for temple construction (1 Chr 22:2-29:25). 3) In fact, with the addition of other materials taken from Samuel, more than half of the Chronicler's presentation of David concerns his preparations for temple construction (1 Chr 13:1-29:25). By focusing on David's enthusiasm for the temple, the Chronicler drew attention to the necessity of similar devotion to the temple in his day.

Fourth, with such a positive presentation of David's reign, it is not surprising that the Chronicler often described times of celebration in David's kingdom (see 12:40; 13:8; 15:16,25,29; 16:23-33; 29:9-25). In fact, the end of each major section of the king's reign includes eating in celebration (12:40; 16:3; 29:22). These records of joy were designed to inspire his post-exilic readers to follow the example of David so that they might share in the blessings of his time (see *Introduction: 27) Disappointment and Celebration*).

Structure of 1 Chr 9:35-29:30

The Chronicler's version of David's reign falls into three main divisions followed by a closure to the reign (see figure 10)

David Becomes King (9:35-12:40)
David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem (13:1-16:43)
David Prepares for Solomon's Temple Construction (17:1-29:30)
Closure of David's Reign (29:26-30)

Outline of 1 Chr 9:35-29:30 (figure 10)

On a large scale, David's reign forms a threefold crescendo. First, David became the king of Israel (9:35-12:40). Second, he moved his kingdom forward by bringing the ark of God into his capital city (13:1-16:43). Third, David devoted himself to preparing for Solomon to build a permanent temple for God in Jerusalem (17:1-29:25). Each of these sections ends with scenes of joyous celebration and feasting to draw attention to the blessings of God at each stage of David's ideal kingdom.

David's Ideal Reign: Part One
David Becomes King
(1 Chr 9:35-12:40)

David's reign opens with a focus on how he became the king of Israel. In this material the Chronicler emphasized that David became the powerful ruler over all Israel with the help of God and the support of the entire nation.

Structure of 1 Chr 9:35-12:40

This first portion of David's reign divides into two main parts (see figure 11).

David Becomes King (9:35-12:40)

- Divine Transfer from Saul to David (9:35-10:14)
 - ◆ Divine Blessing on Saul (9:35-44)
 - ◆ Divine Judgment Against Saul (10:1-14)
 - Saulide Deaths and Israelite Defeat (10:1-7)
 - Israelite Army Flees in Defeat from Philistines (10:1)
 - Saulides Die in Dishonor (10:2-6)
 - Aftermath of Defeat (10:7)
 - Saul's Defilement and Burial (10:8-12)
 - Philistine Defilement of Saul (10:8-10)
 - Gileadite Mourning over Saul (10:11-12)
 - Saul's Death and Defilement Explained (10:13-14)

- David's Widespread Support from Israel (11:1-12:40)
 - ◆ Anointing at Hebron (and Establishment in Jerusalem) (11:1-9)
 - All Israel Anoints David as King (11:1-3)
 - All Israel Invites David to be King (11:1-2)
 - David Complies with a Covenant with Israel (11:3a)
 - Israel Anoints David (11:3b)
 - All Israel and David Make Jerusalem the Royal Capital (11:4-9)
 - David and Israel March to Destroy Jerusalem (11:4a)
 - Jebusites Challenge David to Enter Jerusalem (11:4b-5a)
 - David Captures Jerusalem (11:5b)
 - [Historical Note Concerning Joab (11:6)]
 - David Takes Up Residence in Jerusalem (11:7)
 - David and Joab Rebuild Jerusalem (11:8-9)
 - ◆ Military Support at Hebron (11:10-47)
 - Introduction to Chiefs of Mighty Men (11:10-11a)
 - Jashobeam (11:11b)
 - Eleazar (11:12-14)
 - Introduction (11:12)
 - Eleazar Gathers with David for Battle (11:13a)
 - Other Troops Flee (11:13b)
 - Eleazar and David Take Stand (11:14a)
 - Eleazar and David Receive Victory (11:14b)
 - Three Chiefs (11:15-19)

- Introduction (11:15-16)
 - David Longs for Water (11:17)
 - Three Retrieve Water (11:18a)
 - David Refuses Water (11:18b-19a)
 - Summation (11:19b)
 - Abishai (11:20-21)
 - Benaiah (11:22-25)
 - List of Mighty Men (11:26-47)
- ◆Military Support at Ziklag (12:1-7)
 - Introduction to Ziklag Supporters (12:1-2)
 - List of Ziklag Supporters (12:3-7)
- ◆Military Support at the Desert Stronghold (12:8-18)
 - Gadite Warriors at the Stronghold (12:8-15)
 - Descriptive Introduction (12:8)
 - List of Ranking Commanders (12:9-13)
 - Descriptive Conclusion (12:14-15)
 - Benjamite and Judahite Warriors at the Stronghold (12:16-18)
 - Men Come to Join David's Band (12:16)
 - David Questions Loyalty (12:17)
 - Assurance of Loyalty (12:18a)
 - Men Join David's Band (12:18b)
- ◆More Military Support at Ziklag (12:19-22)
 - Introduction to Manassehite Supporters (12:19)
 - List of Manassehite Supporters (12:20)
 - Closing Remarks on Manassehite Supporters (12:21-22)
- ◆More Military Support at Hebron (12:23-37)
 - Introduction to Supporters at Hebron (12:23)
 - Lists of Supporters from All Tribes (12:24-37)
- ◆More on the Anointing at Hebron (12:38-40)
 - Widespread Determination to Anoint David (12:38)
 - Widespread Celebration of David's Anointing (12:39-40)

Outline of 1 Chr 9:35-12:40 (figure 11)

The first half of this material focuses on Saul's demise as evidence of divine support for David (9:35-10:14). David did not receive royal authority by human schemes but by an act of God. The second half sketches the positive support David received from the nation (11:1-12:40). David's support was not limited to a few tribes of Israel. The entire nation rallied behind his throne.

Divine Transfer from Saul to David (9:35-10:14)

David was not Israel's first king; Saul, the Benjamite had that honor. Consequently, the Chronicler had to give attention to Saul before moving to David. Nevertheless, he only dealt with Saul's demise as a just act by which God gave Saul's throne to David.

Comparison of 9:35-10:14 with 1 Sam 9-31

By comparison with 1 Sam 9-31, the Chronicler's record is severely abbreviated. According to the book of Samuel, David's rise to power was difficult and gradual. The Chronicler, however, omitted the history of David's rise and stressed that David became king by divine intervention in the death of Saul and his family.

Structure of 9:35-10:14

This brief account of the transfer of royal authority to David divides into two parts (see figure 11). The text first stresses the blessings bestowed on Saul (9:35-44), but it moves next to explain how this honor led to a severe divine judgment and the transfer of royal power to David (10:1-14).

Divine Blessing on Saul (9:35-44)

The Chronicler repeated this material from his earlier Benjamite genealogy (see 8:29-40). As we have already seen, this list contains Benjamites who once experienced the blessing of living near Jerusalem. This duplicated record drew attention to the fact that Saul, the first king of Israel, belonged to this special group of Benjamites. Having received such remarkable blessings from God, Saul should have lived in grateful fidelity to God. Yet, as the Chronicler pointed out in the next episode, Saul demonstrated flagrant ingratitude. As a result, his actions led to severe divine judgment.

Divine Judgment Against Saul (10:1-14)

Having reminded his readers of Saul's blessings, the Chronicler moved directly to the judgment that came against Saul. In a single day, God destroyed Saul's family and gave the kingdom to David.

Comparison of 10:1-14 with 1 Sam 31:1-13

This passage is largely identical with its parallel in 1 Sam 31:1-13. For the most part, only minor stylistic differences appear. Nevertheless, four significant variations deserve special mention.

First, in 10:6 (//1 Sam 31:6) the Chronicler added the verb **died** a second time. This repetition intensifies the morbid mood of the passage.

Second, 1 Sam 31:6 reads "and all his men" which the Chronicler changed to **and all his house** (10:6). This variation stresses that the death of Saul and his sons was the virtual end of Saul's dynasty.

Third, the Chronicler shifted attention away from the treatment of Saul's body (1 Sam 31:10) to his decapitation (10:10). This change was probably designed to connect Saul's disgraceful death to the well-known decapitation of Goliath (see 1 Sam 17:51).

Fourth, the Chronicler simplified the actions of the Gileadites who retrieved the bodies of Saul and his sons (10:12 // 1 Sam 31:12). He omitted their night long journey and the cremation of the bodies. These omissions have the effect of drawing attention away from Gileadite heroism and placing more emphasis on the sadness of the events.

Fifth, the Chronicler added the entirety of 10:13-14. These verses explain that the transfer of royal power from Saul to David was the result of God's justice against Saul.

Structure of 10:1-14

These omissions and additions shaped the narrative into two episodes followed by an authorial comment (see figure 11). The story of judgment against Saul begins with an episode of defeat for Israel's army and death for the family of Saul (10:1-7). This episode begins with the Philistine attack (10:1) and closes with the completion of Philistine aggression (10:7). The turning point of this material consists of the death of Saul and his sons (10:2-6). The second episode then presents a twofold scenario: the Philistines defile Saul's body (10:8-10) and the faithful Gileadites bury Saul and his sons in mourning (10:11-12). Finally, the Chronicler added his own comment, explaining why these events occurred (10:13-14).

Saulide Deaths and Israelite Defeat (10:1-7)

For the most part, this story of transition between Saul and David depends on 1 Sam 31:1-13. The entire scenario is morbid and brings to light the tremendous loss that occurred under Saul.

Israelite Army Flees in Defeat from Philistines (10:1)

From the outset, this story offers a negative outlook on the reign of Saul in at least two ways. First, in a straightforward manner, the text notes that **the Philistines fought** and immediately adds that **the Israelites fled** (10:1). Absolutely no mention is made of an initial resistance or struggle. The Israelites were overwhelmed by the Philistines and ran for their lives. The theme of fleeing is repeated again in 10:7.

Second, once the story comes to the Israelite resistance at **Mount Gilboa**, the text only mentions that **many** Israelites **fell slain** (10:1b). No record of Philistine losses appears in the episode.

The significance of this unmitigated victory over Israel becomes evident when we remember that the Philistines were the notorious enemies of Israel. Time and again, they had troubled Israel (see Jdg 13:1; 1 Sam 4:1-10). In the future, David will defeat the Philistines and bring safety from their attacks (see 2 Sam 5:17-25; 1 Chr 14:8-17). At this point, however, Saul was entirely incapable of resisting them.

Throughout his history, the Chronicler presented defeat before enemies as evidence of God's judgment (see *Introduction: 23) Victory and Defeat*). When the kings of Israel were faithful to God, they experienced victory. When they were unfaithful, they lost battles. From the very beginning of this passage, the Chronicler made it clear that Saul's reign was one of tremendous defeat for the people of God. This fact alone showed that Saul was under divine judgment.

Saulides Die in Dishonor (10:2-6)

In 10:2-6 the narrative narrows its focus to the experience of Saul and his family. The Philistines did not hesitate in their aggression. They **pressed hard after Saul and his sons** (10:2). Once again, these enemies of Israel were entirely unhindered. They immediately gained a portion of their goal when **they killed** [Saul's] **sons** (10:2).

The action of the narrative slows in 10:3-5 to give a detailed account of Saul's ignoble demise. Step by step the narrative reports that **the fighting grew fierce, the archers**

overtook Saul, and **they wounded him** (10:3). The only speech in this episode involves Saul speaking **to his armor-bearer** (10:4). In utter fear that the Philistines **will come and abuse** him, he ordered the armor-bearer to kill him (10:4). The armor-bearer was also **terrified** and refused (10:4). So Saul took his own life (10:4).

Following Samuel, the Chronicler summarized that Saul's **three sons** died (10:6 // 1 Sam 31:6). Elsewhere we learn that one of Saul's descendants, Esh-Bosheth (Esh-Baal) survived (8:33; 9:39; 2 Sam 2:8). Nevertheless, the Chronicler added that **all** [of Saul's] **house died together** (10:6). Two aspects of this addition stand out. First, in this context the word **house** has the connotation of "dynasty," as it does on other occasions (see 17:10 // 2 Sam 7:11). Although one of Saul's sons survived him, from the Chronicler's perspective this battle sealed the fate of Saul's dynasty. Second, the Chronicler repeated the verb **died** for a second time in this verse. As a result, the same Hebrew term occurs five times in this episode (10:5 [twice], 6 [twice], 7 [once]). The addition of a fifth use of this verb adds to the morbid character of the episode.

Aftermath of Defeat (10:7)

The closing step of this episode focuses on the geographical loss to Israel. Twice the text uses the term **fled** (10:7). As in the beginning of this episode (see 10:1), the Israelites demonstrated that they were under God's judgment because they fled from their enemies (see *Introduction: 23) Victory and Defeat*). Moreover, the Philistines **came and occupied** the land without resistance (10:7).

At a number of points in the preceding genealogies and lists, the Chronicler drew attention to the land possessed by various groups within Israel. (For the Chronicler's geographical hopes see comments on 2:42-55.) These geographical references were designed to encourage the post-exilic community to hope for repossession of these lands. At this point, however, the Chronicler pointed out that a portion of this heritage was lost in the days of Saul.

Saul's Defilement and Burial (10:8-12)

The second episode of this section divides into two parts which continue to portray Saul's reign in a negative light. The Philistines abused Saul and his sons and Israel entered a time of mourning.

Philistine Defilement of Saul (10:8-10)

The brief account of the Philistines handling Saul's dead body divides into two scenes. They found the corpses of Saul and his sons (10:8), and they defiled Saul's corpse (10:9-10).

On the next day the Philistines returned to the battle scene **to strip the dead** and they **found Saul and his sons** (10:8). Saul had committed suicide because he feared how the Philistines would make sport of him (see 10:4); his fear was justified. The Philistines not only **stripped him** (10:9); they also **took his head and his armor** and **sent messengers** to spread the news of their victory over Israel (10:9).

1 Sam 31:10b reads, "and fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan." The Chronicler shifted attention away from Saul's body and noted that the Philistines **hung up his head** (10:10b). In this way, the Chronicler's account alludes to David's decapitation and public defilement of Goliath (see 1 Sam 17:48-57). The contest with Goliath had already cast a shadow over Saul's kingship by honoring David over Saul. In the light of this story, however, Saul's disgrace was intensified by the fact that the Philistines dishonored him just as David had disgraced Goliath.

10:9-10 also intensifies the religious dimension of Saul's dishonor. Philistine messengers proclaimed **the news among their idols**, i.e. at their worship centers (10:9). The Philistines placed Saul's armor in **the temple of their gods** (10:10 [1 Sam 31:10 reads "the temple of the Ashtoreths"]). In addition, the Chronicler noted that Saul's head was displayed **in the temple of Dagon** (10:10). The Philistines celebrated their victory over Saul before their gods because they attributed their success to the powers of their deities. Thus, it was made clear to all that God had utterly forsaken Saul to the power of foreign gods (see Deut 4:25-28; 28:36,37; Jer 16:13).

Gileadite Mourning over Saul (10:11-12)

In contrast with these events, some men from Jabesh Gilead retrieved the mutilated bodies of Saul and his sons. This material divides into two parts: the retrieval of the bodies (10:11-12a) and the mourning (10:12b).

Apparently, the men from Jabesh Gilead had not forgotten how Saul defended them against the Ammonites (see 1 Sam 11:1-15). They risked their own safety to retrieve the corpses. As noted above, the Chronicler omitted some of the details found in 1 Sam 31:12-13. The writer of Samuel noted that the Gileadites traveled through the night and removed Saul's headless corpse and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-Shan (see 1 Sam 31:12). They also burned the bodies in defiance of the Philistines (see 1 Sam 31:12) and buried the bones of their royal family (see 1 Sam 31:13).

The Chronicler probably omitted these details because of their heroic character. While the record of Samuel emphasizes the courage of the Gileadites, the Chronicler's purpose was to stress the mournful mood of the situation. The Chronicler admitted that these were **valiant men** (10:12), but he downplayed their courageous actions by moving quickly to the final scene where the men of Jabesh **fasted seven days** (10:12). The character of Saul's kingdom was symbolized in this event; he brought only death and mourning to the nation.

Saul's Death and Defilement Explained (10:13-14)

The Chronicler ended this section with an authorial comment. Why had these tragic events taken place? The text boldly urges that **the Lord put him to death** (10:14). The Hebrew of this passage simply reads, "He put him to death" (see NAS, NRS, NKJ), but the reference to God is clear from the context. On a number of occasions the Chronicler revealed the divine purposes behind the establishment of David's kingdom (see 11:3,9-10,14; 12:18,23;14:2; see also *Introduction: 10) Divine Activity*). Here he pointed out that in the final analysis it was not the Philistines who killed Saul; God himself killed the first king of Israel.

God put Saul to death for three reasons. 1) Saul had been **unfaithful to the Lord** (10:13). The term "unfaithful" appears a number of times in Chronicles to indicate attitudes and actions which constituted flagrant violations of Israel's covenant with God (see *Introduction: 21) Unfaithfulness*). On the whole, Saul's life was one of serious infidelity. 2) To be more specific, the Chronicler added that Saul had **consulted a medium** (10:13). Saul's consultation with the medium of Endor was a serious violation of Mosaic laws against necromancy (see Lev 19:31; 20:6,27; Deut 18:11-12). 3) Saul's encounter with the medium illustrated how he **did not inquire of the Lord** (10:14). The Chronicler frequently spoke of "inquiring of" or "seeking" the Lord as expressive of a sincere dependence on God in times of trouble (see *Introduction: 19) Seeking*). From his point of view, Saul's life was characterized by the opposite of such dependence on God.

The Chronicler wasted no time in explaining the purpose for God's judgment. God killed Saul and **turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse** (10:14). In these words, the Chronicler emphasized that the selection of David as king over Israel was no historical accident, nor did David gain his throne through his own devices. The transfer of royal power from Saul to David was the result of divine intervention.

In the days of David, some Benjamites challenged the right of David's reign on several occasions (see 2 Sam 2-4). There can be little doubt that challenges against the Davidic throne took place even in the post-exilic period. After all, David's house had brought much trouble to Israel, including the exile to Babylon (see 2 Kgs 21:11-15). The Chronicler's authorial

comment, however, made his point of view evident. David's descendants were the rightful heirs of the throne because David received the throne by a just act of God.