

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

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<p>David Prepares for the Temple, part 3: David Secures the Nation and Collects Temple Materials, part 1 (1 Chronicles 18:1-17)</p>

David Secures the Nation and Collects Temple Materials (18:1-20:8)

Having described how David accepted God's commission to prepare for Solomon's temple, the Chronicler turned to David's efforts to provide the security and materials necessary for temple construction.

Comparison of 18:1-20:8 with 2 Sam 8:1-21:22

The Chronicler's distinctive portrait of these events emerges when his record is compared with Samuel (see figure 17).

In several portions of this material, the Chronicler followed the book of Samuel rather closely (18:1-19 // 2 Sam 8:1-18; 19:1-20:3 // 10:1-11:1a; 12:26,30-31; 20:4-8 // 2 Sam 21:18-22). These passages differ only in small ways which we will discuss in the comments on each segment.

Nevertheless, the Chronicler also omitted several large sections from the book of Samuel. First, he omitted David's acceptance of Mephibosheth into the royal court (2 Sam 9:1-13). David's action was generous, but it also may have encouraged some Benjamites to hope that the family of Saul would take the throne again (see 2 Sam 16:1-3; 20:1-2). Apparently, the Chronicler had no time for such considerations.

Second, the Chronicler did not report David's sin with Bathsheba, nor the troubles that followed (2 Sam 11:2-21:14). This is the largest single portion of Samuel not included in Chronicles. The Chronicler's purpose was to concentrate on those aspects of David's reign which were exemplary for his post-exilic readers. This portion of Samuel did not fit with that purpose.

1 Chr		2 Sam
18:1-13	David's Victories (closely parallel)	8:1-14
18:14-19	David's Righteous Reign (closely parallel)	8:15-18
-----	David Accepts Mephibosheth (omitted)	9:1-13
19:1-20:3	David's Victory over Ammonites (parallel)	10:1-11:1a 12:26,30-31
-----	David Sins with Bathsheba (omitted)	11:1b-27
-----	David's Rebuke from Nathan (omitted)	12:1-25
-----	David's Troubled House (omitted)	13:1-21:14
-----	David's Rescue from Philistines (omitted)	21:15-17
20:4-8	David's Victory over Philistines (closely parallel)	21:18-22

Comparison of 1 Chr 18:1-20:8 with 2 Sam 8:1-21:22 (figure 17)

Third, the Chronicler omitted the story of David's near death at the hands of the Philistines (2 Sam 21:15-17). This narrative illustrated how David's military might diminished after his fall into sin.

Structure of 18:1-20:8

The Chronicler selected material from 2 Sam 8:1-22 to form a threefold structure. Each portion of this structure illustrates how David was successful in battle and gathered

materials for Solomon's temple project (see figure 16). This threefold division is based on the repeated introductory words **in the course of time** (18:1; 19:1; 20:4). These markers divide the materials into a broad description of David's victories and domestic security (18:1-17) followed by victories against specific enemies (19:1-20:3; 20:4-8).

David's Victories and Domestic Security (18:1-17)

David's collection of materials for the temple began with a series of victories, tributes, and a description of national security under David. This section illustrates how David won battles, gathered plunder, and arranged domestic affairs under God's blessing.

Comparison of 18:1-17 with 2 Sam 8:1-18

For the most part, the Chronicler followed Samuel closely. A number of minor differences have resulted from errors in textual transmission (see *Introduction: Translation and Transmission*). Nevertheless, four differences deserve comment.

First, the Chronicler did not mention David's harsh treatment of the Moabites (2 Sam 8:2a). It is possible that this omission occurred by an error in textual transmission (see *Introduction: Translation and Transmission*), but it is also possible that the Chronicler intentionally omitted it to avoid detracting from the positive mood of the passage.

Second, 18:4 reads "**seven thousand horsemen**," but 2 Sam 8:4 reads "seventeen hundred horsemen" (see NIV margin). It is likely that one or both of these texts has suffered corruption at some point in transmission (see *Introduction: Translation and Transmission*).

Third, 18:8 (// 2 Sam 8:8) adds the note that **with it Solomon made the bronze sea and the pillars and the vessels of bronze**. This addition reveals one of the Chronicler's chief concerns in this material. The spoils of David's victories were used in Solomon's temple.

Fourth, it is possible that the omission of 2 Sam 8:12b-13a occurred accidentally in the transmission of Chronicles (see *Introduction: Translation and Transmission*). Yet, it is also possible that the Chronicler purposefully omitted at least 2 Sam 8:13a to avoid any negative connotations that may have been associated with "David [making] a name for himself."

Structure of 18:1-17

This portion of the Chronicler's record divides into two main parts (see figure 16). David's military accomplishments are quickly surveyed (18:1-13) and the results of national security come to light (18:14-17).

David's Victories in All Directions (18:1-13)

The Chronicler first reported David's victories in a number of geographical settings. The record of victories consists of three sections: David's victories (18:1-6), plunder and tribute (18:7-11), and a final notice of victories (18:12-13).

In the opening verses (18:1-6), the Chronicler mentioned victories against **Philistines** (18:1), **Moabites** (18:2), **Hadadezer king of Zobah** (18:3-4), and the **Arameans** (18:5-6a). Each of these enemies was well-known from Israel's history as notorious opponents (see Num 22-25; Jdg 3:1-3,7-11,12-31; 13:1-16:31; 1 Sam 4:1-11). They had troubled the people of God throughout the centuries, but David defeated them all.

The importance of 18:6b can be seen in its duplication in 18:13b. The Chronicler made it clear how David conquered these enemies. He did not win in his own strength; **the Lord gave David victory** (18:6b; see *Introduction: 10) Divine Activity*). In fact, David had victory **everywhere he went** (18:6b).

This catalogue of David's victories encouraged the Chronicler's readers as they faced military dangers in their day. The prophets had promised great victories for the post-exilic community (see Isa 11:11-16; 49:14-26; 54:1-3; Jer 30:10-11; Amos 9:11-12). David's successes demonstrated that they could defeat their enemies with the help of the Lord (see *Introduction: 23) Victory and Defeat*).

The second portion of this passage describes how David took much plunder and received tribute (18:7-11). In the first place (18:7-8), David took ceremonial **gold shields** from **Hadadezer** (18:7), whose defeat is mentioned earlier (see 18:3-4). He also took **a great quantity of bronze** (18:8a). The significance of this massive plunder becomes clear in the closing comment in 18:8b. The Chronicler added to 2 Sam 7:8 that Solomon used this bronze **to make the bronze Sea, the pillars and various bronze articles** (18:8b). These words relate David's victory to the larger overarching purpose of this portion of Chronicles. These wars were part of the king's preparations for the Jerusalem temple.

In the second place (18:9-11), the text mentions the tribute which **Tou king of Hamath** paid to David (18:9). It included **all kinds of articles of gold and silver and bronze** (18:10). Once again, however, the significance of David receiving this grand tribute is made clear in a closing comment. **King David dedicated these articles to the Lord** (18:11a). In

other words, this tribute was also used in the temple. To draw even greater attention to this focus, the passage indicates that this was not an unique event. David had given **the silver and gold he had taken from all these nations** to the temple project (18:11b).

The second list of victories (18:12-13) closes this section and balances with 18:1-8 by repeating the explanation of David's successes: **the Lord gave David victory everywhere he went** (18:13b see 18:6b). As noted above, the Chronicler may have omitted the fact that David "made a name for himself" (2 Sam 8:13) to avoid any negative connotations that may have been associated with the expression (see Gen 11:4).

Abishai led David's forces and conquered **eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt** (18:12b). In the traditional Hebrew text, 2 Sam 8:13b reads "eighteen thousand Syrians" (see NAS, NKJ). The difference between Chronicles and Samuel at this point is due to scribal confusion at some stage in transmission (*Introduction: Translation and Transmission*). In some periods of the Hebrew language, the words "Syria" and "Edom" looked very similar and were easily confused. For this reason, some English translations follow a few Hebrew manuscripts and correctly emend 2 Sam 8:13b to read "eighteen thousand Edomites" (see NRS, NIV).

In the days of Moses, Israel was to show kindness to the Edomites because they were descendants of Esau and relatives of the Israelites (see Gen 36:1-43; Dt 2:1-7; 23:7). Moreover, the Edomites lived outside the land of promise and were not the object of Israel's conquest (see Deut 20:2-5). Even so, throughout Israel's history the Edomites troubled the people of God and thereby lost their protected status (see Num 20:14-21; 1 Sam 14:47). By the Chronicler's day, Edom had come to be a hated enemy of Israel deserving severe punishment. In fact, Amos specifically named Edom as an enemy over whom the post-exilic community would have victory (see Amos 9:11-12). As a result, when the Chronicler reported that **all the Edomites became subject to David** (18:13b), he inspired his readers to hope for their own eventual victory over this archenemy.

David's Resulting National Security (18:14-17)

The Chronicler continued following the account of Samuel with little variation to demonstrate the extent to which David received victory from the Lord (// 2 Sam 8:15-18). Although these verses mention military leaders (18:15,17), they focus more broadly on David's domestic accomplishments. His positive national achievements resulted from the blessing of military security.

The opening verse reveals the general outlook to be taken on this passage. **David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people** (18:14). The mention of **all Israel** (18:14) comes from Samuel, but it fit well with the Chronicler's

purposes here. It expressed the breadth of David's kingdom which served as an ideal for the Chronicler's readers (see *Introduction: 1) All Israel*). Moreover, David also did **what was just and right for all his people** (18:14). In other words, the entire nation benefitted from David's reign (see *Introduction: 4-9) King and Temple*). It was a kingdom of justice and righteousness for every class of Israelites. This description of the size and quality of David's reign reveals the wonder of his kingdom. His wars were so successful (18:1-13) that he was able to form an ideal kingdom.

The verses that follow (18:15-17) list a number of officials in David's kingdom. Most of these people are well-known from other portions of Scripture. Their appointments provided a secure bureaucracy for Solomon. In this sense, even this aspect of David's efforts prepared the way for temple construction.

The Chronicler incorporated this material into his history to illustrate several ways in which David's kingdom served as an ideal for his post-exilic readers. Just as these aspects of David's reign prepared the way for Solomon's greater achievements, so too the post-exilic kingdom must emulate David to secure further blessings from God.