

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

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## David Prepares for the Temple, part 7: David's Commission of Temple Construction (1 Chronicles 22:2-19)

### *David's Commission of Temple Construction (22:2-19)*

The Chronicler now came to the fourth major step in David's preparation for the temple (see figure 16). David accepted his commission to prepare for Solomon (17:1-27); he secured the nation and collected much wealth for the temple (18:1-20:8); he also discovered the site of the temple (21:1-22:1). At this point, the Chronicler turned to David's transfer of the temple project to Solomon (22:2-19). This passage balances with 18:1-20:8 as David commissioned the use of the materials he had acquired through war.

### *Comparison of 22:2-19 with Samuel and Kings*

This passage comes entirely from the Chronicler's hand. He may have used other sources, but with the exception of several minor allusions, he did not depend on Samuel, Kings, or other portions of Scripture.

### *Structure of 22:2-19*

David's commission of temple construction divides into three parallel reports (see figure 16). Each of these reports focuses on different aspects of David's commission to build. He explained his preparations (22:2-5), commissioned Solomon (22:6-16), and ordered Israel's leaders to support Solomon (22:17-19). Each of these passages contains a speech by David concerning Solomon as the temple builder (see 22:5a,7-16,18-19).

### *David's Extensive Preparations for Solomon (22:2-5)*

The end of this passage reveals the main concerns of this section; David **made extensive preparations before his death** (22:5b). The Chronicler touched on three kinds

of provisions: foreign masons (22:2), metals (22:3), and wood (22:4). David recalled this threefold provision in his words to Solomon later in this chapter (see 22:15). It should be noted that David included foreigners among his workers (22:2; see *Introduction: 3) International Relations*). Their presence in David's day set a precedent for the Chronicler's readers.

Several times the quantity of David's provisions comes into focus. **He provided a large amount of iron ... more bronze than could be weighed ... more cedar logs than could be counted ... large numbers of them** (22:3-4). The Chronicler employed these hyperboles to engender wonder and amazement at how much David had done. (For the Chronicler's use of hyperbole see comments on 12:14.) His temple preparations were not minimal; they were astonishing. In much the same way, the Chronicler's post-exilic readers were to provide astounding supplies for the temple in their day.

David explained why he had made these preparations (22:5a). In all likelihood David said these words before or as he gathered the provisions of 22:4. If this is correct, then the expression "**David said**" (22:5a) should be translated, "David had said." The text does not designate to whom David had spoken. Without a clear recipient of speech these words can mean "to speak to oneself" or "to think to oneself." Later David spoke to Solomon (see 22:6-16) and to the leaders of Israel (see 22:17-19). It is possible that David had spoken aloud to the **aliens** he gathered (22:2), but it is also possible that David had merely spoken or thought to himself. If this latter understanding is correct, we have here one of the few times the Chronicler revealed the inner thoughts of a character to his readers (see 1 Chr 13:12; 14:2; 2 Chr 32:1).

David reflected that the purpose of his extensive preparations was to aid Solomon. He claimed that **Solomon is young and inexperienced** and the temple is to be **of great magnificence and fame and splendor** (22:5). David was convinced that the task ahead was more than Solomon could handle. He knew that the only way for Solomon to succeed was for materials to be provided for him.

David's actions demonstrated that any temple worthy of the Lord would require extensive preparations. The temple foundation initially built by Zerubbabel disappointed many of the people who saw it because it was not as grand as Solomon's temple (see Ezr 3:12-13). The Chronicler's report of David's words encouraged his readers to continue expanding the temple to the grand scale it deserved despite the enormous efforts required.

#### *David's Commission of Solomon (22:6-16)*

The Chronicler turned next to David's commission of Solomon. This speech was one of two in which David spoke directly to his son (see 28:9-16; 20-21). Here the speech is relatively private; the second speech occurred in public ceremony. The record of

David's words divides into three parts: heading (22:6), background (22:7-10), and exhortation (22:11-16).

The heading of this section characterizes the speech that follows. Above all, David **charged** [Solomon] **to build a house for the Lord** (22:6). In the background to his charge (22:7-10), David summarized the events of 17:1-14 (// 2 Sam 7:1-16). He described how he had desired **to build a house for the Name of the Lord** (22:7; see also 22:8,10,19). Like a number of biblical traditions before him, the Chronicler emphasized that the temple was the place of God's Name, his accessible power. He stressed this motif to draw the attention of his post-exilic readers to the source of divine help in their day (see 2 Chr 6:18-21; see also *Introduction: 11) Name of God*). Even so, David recalled that his personal desire to build was countered by **the word from the Lord** (22:8a).

On several occasions David recalled the words of Nathan as they appear in 17:4-15. God told Nathan that David was prohibited from building the temple (compare 22:8 and 17:4). God also told Nathan that He would raise up one of David's sons (compare 22:9 and 17:11), who would build a temple for the Lord (compare 22:10 and 17:12). Moreover, Nathan spoke of God making David's son his own son (compare 22:10 and 17:13), and he promised to establish his throne forever (compare 22:10 and 17:12,14). Through these allusions the Chronicler demonstrated once again the importance of Nathan's prophecy. Prophetic speech validated David's transfer of power to Solomon much as it had legitimized the transfer from Saul to David (see 11:3; see also *Introduction: 15) Prophets*).

Nevertheless, one element in this passage does not appear in the earlier report of Nathan's revelation. 22:8-9 explains why God did not permit David to build the temple. David had **shed much blood** and **fought many wars** (22:8). As we have already seen, the Chronicler emphasized David's wars as a resource for collecting materials for temple construction (see 18:11). Even so, David's extensive involvement in warfare disqualified him from building the temple.

This divine directive stems from Mosaic legislation. As Deut 12:8-11 indicates, centralization of worship was to take place only after conquest had ended and the land was occupied in peace. This pattern was reflected in other ancient Near Eastern cultures. Many of Israel's neighbors believed that their gods entered their temples only after they had destroyed their enemies in warfare. Similar associations between peace and temple construction appear in several passages (see 2 Sam 7:1; 1 Kg 5:12). Solomon, whose name is derived from the Hebrew word "peace," would be **a man of peace and rest**; he would experience the blessing of **peace from all his enemies** (22:9; see also 22:18). David's reign was not sufficiently separated from warfare to permit him to build a place for God's Name on earth.

Perhaps the Chronicler added this material in response to opponents of temple construction and expansion in his own day. If David did not build, then why should they? Here the Chronicler pointed out clearly that the only reason David did not move forward was because God stopped him (see 17:1-27).

David turned next to exhort Solomon (22:11-16). The first portion of this exhortation (22:11-13) alludes to God's word to Joshua at the beginning of the conquest of Canaan (see Jos 1:1-9). Both Joshua and Solomon were admonished to keep God's Law (compare 22:12-13 and Josh 1:7-8). In obeying the Law they would be enabled to act wisely (compare 22:12 and Josh 1:8) and find **success** (compare 22:13 and Josh 1:8). This outlook on the function of the Law fit well with the Chronicler's overall perspective on the subject. Obedience to God's standards brought blessings to his people (see *Introduction: 14) Standards*). In addition, both Joshua and Solomon were told not to fear or be discouraged, but rather to be **strong and courageous** (22:13; see 19:13; 28:10,20; 2 Chr 15:7; 32:7 and Josh 1:6,7,9). Finally, both men were encouraged to **begin the work** (compare 22:16 and Josh 1:1) for God was **with** [them] (compare 22:11,16 and Josh 1:5,9). For God to be "with" someone meant that God would fight for them and give them success (see 2 Chr 13:12; see also *Introduction: 10) Divine Activity*). By including these allusions to Joshua, the Chronicler tied Solomon's reign to David as Joshua's leadership was tied to Moses. Even as Moses and Joshua joined together in the one project of claiming the promised land for Israel, David and Solomon joined together in the one project of temple construction.

The last portion of David's exhortation returns to the theme of how much David had provided for Solomon (22:14-16a; see 22:2-5). Once again, the extensive quantity of David's preparations receives emphasis. The amounts of money -**a hundred thousand talents of gold** (about 3,750 tons [3,450 metric tons]), **a million talents of silver** (about 37,500 tons [about 34,500 metric tons]) (22:14) appear enormous. Solomon's annual base revenue was only "666 talents of gold" (1 Kgs 10:14). That the other metals were described as **too great to be weighed** (22:14) and the craftsmen are said to be **beyond number** (22:16) suggests that all these amounts were intentionally exaggerated to stress how much David provided. (For the Chronicler's use of hyperbole see comments on 12:14.) Solomon was told he simply had to **add to** what David had done (22:14). Nothing more was needed but for Solomon to **begin the work** (22:16). He would succeed because God was **with him** (22:16), fighting for the king against all opposition (see also *Introduction: 10) Divine Activity*).

#### *David's Order for Leaders to Help Solomon (22:17-19)*

The Chronicler closed this section with a scene in which David explained his goals to **all the leaders of Israel** (22:17). The purpose of his speech is summarized as an

attempt to get them **to help his son Solomon** (22:17). In line with his concern over Solomon's inexperience (see 22:5), David recognized that his son needed the assistance of Israel's leaders. The task was not the exclusive responsibility of the royal family; **all the leaders** were to be involved (22:17).

David spoke to the leaders about two matters. First, he reminded them of all he and God had done for them. He said that God had been "**with you**," (22:18; see 22:11,16) because God had fought for Israel against her enemies (see 2 Chr 13:12; see also *Introduction: 10) Divine Activity*). As a result, God "**granted you rest**" (22:18; see *Introduction: 23) Victory and Defeat*). But when did these blessings occur? Through what instrument? David made his viewpoint plain. The blessing of God came to the nation when God gave **the inhabitants of the land over to** [David] (22:18). As the Chronicler pointed out a number of times, David's accomplishments as king were the source of great blessings to Israel (see *Introduction: 4-9) King and Temple*).

On the basis of these blessings, David called the leaders of Israel to carry out his plan for temple construction (22:19). David desired no mere outward compliance with his orders. He exhorted the leaders to **devote** [their] **heart and soul to seeking the Lord** (22:19). Similar terminology appears many times in Chronicles to indicate a deep seated religious zeal. This devotion is to be from the **heart and soul** (see *Introduction: 16) Motivations*) and it is to involve **seeking the Lord** for help and guidance (see *Introduction: 19) Seeking*). Of course, this religious zeal was to show itself in action. The leaders were to **begin to build** so that they might also **bring the ark ... and the sacred articles ... into the temple** (22:19).

Once again the Chronicler used traditional language and designated the ark as **the ark of the covenant of the Lord** (22:19). For the significance of this designation in Chronicles see *Introduction: 13) Covenant*.

David mentioned that the temple would be **for the Name of the Lord** (22:19). The Chronicler focused on the presence of God's Name in the temple on a number of occasions. The Name of God was the invocable presence of God. God's people could approach the transcendent God of all creation in the temple (see *Introduction: 11) Name of God*).

The Chronicler undoubtedly reported this address to inspire and direct his post-exilic readers. Support for the temple was not exclusively the responsibility of the royal Davidic family. All the leaders of post-exilic Israel were to help the royal family. Those leaders of Israel who hesitated to support efforts related to the temple opposed the directives of David himself. Moreover, they denied themselves access to the powerful Name of God. The post-exilic readers were called to carry out David's commission just as the leaders in David's day.