

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 25
2 Samuel 1-4; 1 Chronicles 1-9

Key Concepts: The key concepts here are that David will continue to demonstrate faithfulness to Saul, show political acumen and that in Chronicles the writer will use genealogies to demonstrate that God's people encompass both Israel and other nations, as well as the good, bad and the ugly within the nation of Israel itself.

Stories: Our stories in 2 Samuel pick up with the death of Saul and include David's receiving the news of Saul's death, David's having the messenger executed, a lament for Saul, David being declared the King of Judah while Ishbosheth is made King of Israel (meaning all tribes other than Judah), the initial skirmish between the "generals" of the two nations, the ensuing war, David's fertility, David's diplomacy, Joab's betrayal, David's wise political move in the face of the betrayal, the murder of Ishbosheth and the execution of the murderers. 1 Chronicles begins with nine chapters of genealogy. These begin with Adam and include the children of Abraham (including those from Ishmael) and finish with the first returnees to the land of Israel after the exile (which we will not reach for quite some time).

Brief Summary: We begin with the transition from the reign of Saul to the reign of David. In 1 Samuel we have been given at least a couple of reasons why God had abandoned Saul, even as Saul remained the king and defender of Israel for an extended period of time. With his death the nation needed to choose new leadership. Judah immediately chose David (which is linked to his having been chosen by God for the job). The northern tribes chose Ishbosheth, a son of Saul (remembering that Jonathan, Saul's chosen heir had died with Saul). Each of the leaders had generals (Joab-David, Abner-Ishbosheth). War breaks out almost immediately and continues for about seven years. Over time Abner sees the tide turning and tries to strike a deal with David. David is willing but Joab is not and murders Abner. Ultimately Ishbosheth is murdered as well. This opens the door for David to become the only king.

Through these stories we witness David's ability to have his enemies killed while remaining above the fray. First when a messenger brings word of Saul's death (and the crown) David has him executed because he killed Saul, even though the man was doing what Saul asked of him. Thus David can become king without having killed Saul. Next when Abner is murdered by Joab, David praises Abner (even though they had been at war) thus insuring the northern tribes that he, David, is an honorable man, deserving to be king. The same thing happens when Ishbosheth is murdered. David has the killers put to death in order to show his innocence in the matter. David then has Ishbosheth's head (which had been brought to him) buried in the same place as was Abner. These moves open the door for David to be seen by Israel as God's chosen leader and not a usurper of Saul's throne.

The first two chapters of Chronicles contain genealogies which are faithful to the Genesis account. What is fascinating about these genealogies is that they remind the reader that David is connected both to the people of Israel as well to other nations which had been enemies of Israel. It also offers reminders of those times when the people of the earth were not faithful (Noah and the Tower of Babel) as well as when they were (Abraham). In addition the writer does not move immediately to David's line but takes the time to look at all of the other tribes. This is important because it reminds the reader that God cares for all of Israel (north and south) and not simply one tribe.

1. What is your current impression of David? What can we learn from him?
2. Even though David condemns Abner's murder he lets Joab live. What do you make of that?
3. Why are genealogies important? What lessons can we learn from them?