

Two Year Bible Trek
Week 28
2 Samuel 5-6; 1 Chronicles 10-16

Key Concepts: The key concepts in these sections, especially in 1 Chronicles are that David is presented as the perfect God-chosen ruler (as over Saul) and that David will insure that Jerusalem becomes not only the political, but also the religious center of Israelite life.

Stories: In 2 Samuel we have David's enthronement over all of Israel, the capture of Jerusalem, war with the Philistines, a first failed attempt to bring the Ark into Jerusalem, a second successful attempt to bring it in, David's half-naked dancing and his wife Michal's disgust with him and her punishment. In 1 Chronicles we read of Saul's death (along with all of his family), the bravery of the people of Jabesh-Gilead in recovering Saul's body for burial, all Israel gathering to make David king, the capture of Jerusalem, a listing of David's mighty men, David's desire to bring the Ark to Jerusalem, a first unsuccessful attempt to bring the Ark into Jerusalem, the friendship of King Hiram of Tyre, David's expanding family, war with the Philistines, the building of David's house, the preparation of a place for the Ark, a second and more religiously appropriate bringing of the Ark into Jerusalem, Michal's disgust with David, songs of praise for God's faithfulness and completion of the Covenant promises and the appropriate elements of worship before the Ark.

Brief Summary: We enter into the portions of Samuel and Chronicles which run side-by-side. What we will notice however is that while some of the stories are often the same, Chronicles offers us a very different perspective on David and his reign. In some ways the writer of Chronicles presents David as he ought to have been rather than as he was. David and his men of valor become larger than life characters who personify ultimate bravery and faithfulness to God in every conceivable way.

There are many places where 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles diverge. We will look at two. The first concerns Saul's death. 2 Samuel makes it clear that, following Saul's death, a war ensues between David and Saul's family and allies. This war lasts for a number of years and is only resolved when the leader of the Saul clan is assassinated. It is only then that Israel comes to David and invites him to be their king. In the 1 Chronicles story there is no mention of the war. In fact, it is implied that Saul's entire family was killed by the Philistines, whereupon all of Israel immediately went over to David. In addition 1 Chronicles tells us that many of the mightiest men of Israel had come over to David prior to Saul's death. Why the difference? Speculation is that the writer wants to insure that David is seen as the one and only king who was truly chosen by God. Thus all allegiance is to be given to David and his line.

A second place where the stories diverge is in the bringing of the Ark into Jerusalem. In Samuel we once again see the "earthly" David. When Uzzah is killed while touching the Ark, David drops the Ark like a hot-potato. Later when he sees that God has blessed the people caring for the Ark, David wants it brought into the city. In so doing David dances in such a way that he literally exposes himself in public, for which his wife Michal despises him. In Chronicles we learn that when Uzzah is killed David places the Ark with a priestly family, then follows all of the appropriate Torah rules for carrying the Ark into the city. This includes making sure only Levites carry the Ark. Finally Michal hates him not for exposing himself but because she is like her father Saul, an evil person. Once again then David is seen as the perfect leader who lives in total Torah allegiance.

1. Which of the two stories do you prefer and why?
2. What do these differing stories tell you about how "history" is understood by the writers?
3. Why do you think the Biblical compilers included both sets of stories?