

Two Year Bible Trek  
Week 38  
2 Samuel 19-24; 1 Chronicles 21-25

**Key Concepts:** The key to watch in these two sections is the different manner in which each approaches the end of David's reign. 2 Samuel will continue to show us the "earthy" David making some dubious choices while 1 Chronicles shows us David as the all wise and future thinking king.

**Stories:** The stories in 2 Samuel include David mourning Absalom's death, Joab's intervention, David's reuniting the kingdom, the Sheba revolt, the murder of Amasa, the death of Sheba, a famine and the execution of members of Saul's family, war against the Philistines, David's song to God, a listing of David's mighty men and their exploits, the census and pestilence and David's purchase of a threshing floor. The stories of 1 Chronicles include Satan inciting David to conduct a census, the resulting pestilence, David's plans to have Solomon build a temple, David's reason for not building it, David making Solomon king, the organization of the Levites, priests and musicians.

**Brief Summary:** 2 Samuel offers us a very complex set of stories that witness to David's continuing decline in terms of his leadership and his ability to make appropriate choices. It begins with David's mourning the death of his son Absalom. Remember that Absalom had not only conspired against David but had engaged in open rebellion, forced David from the capitol, slept with David's concubines and tried to have David killed. Yet, when David learns that Absalom is dead he weeps bitterly; meaning he does not weep for the deaths of his own soldiers or give thanks to those who saved him. Had this behavior continued David would have been deserted by all of his mighty men and his army. It is only Joab who saves the day by forcing David to act like a king.

Upon his return to Jerusalem, David punishes his concubines (though they were not at fault), waits for Joab to pursue the rebel Sheba (rather than asking Joab), allows Joab to get off scot free with the murder of Amasa, who was the titular head of David's armies, gives up members of Saul's family to be hanged in order to deal with a famine, and finally has to be asked not to lead his armies because he is too old. At the same time the compilers of these texts insert a psalm in which David declares himself to be blameless before God (22:24) and states that God's blessings are due to David's "cleanness" in God's sight. The upside of the psalm is that David at least recognizes that his success is ultimately due to God and not to David's own prowess.

1 Chronicles offers us a very different view of David's declining years. It begins with a clear statement that the census David undertakes is caused by Satan tempting him. In 2 Samuel it is God (2 Samuel 24:1) who, because of Israel's sins, incites David to take the census. Thus, the writer of 1 Chronicles has not only left out all of the difficult details concerning David's decline, but has altered the story in order to protect God from asking David to do something that God hates (namely "numbering" the people).

What we also encounter in 1 Chronicles is David's clear-headed thinking about the issues of succession. Solomon is declared to be the king-in-waiting and no mention is made of David's other, and older, sons. In addition David makes all of the arrangements for the construction and manning of the Temple. This becomes important during the reign of Solomon and his offspring because it gives support to their claims to the throne.

1. Which of the two stories do like the most and why?
2. Why do you suppose the compilers of the scriptures included both sets of stories?
3. How do you see God's actions in your life as contributing to your success?