

## Two Year Bible Trek

### Week 40

#### Week 40 – 1 Chronicles 26-29; 2 Chronicles 1; 1 Kings 1-4

**Key Concepts:** This section concerns the transition of the kingship from David to Solomon.

**Stories:** The 1 Chronicles text continues David's organization of his kingdom so that there will be a smooth transition for Solomon, David's transmission of the blueprints for the Temple to his son, and the installation of Solomon along with the retirement and death of David. 2 Chronicles shows Solomon sacrificing at Gibeon, asking for wisdom from God and then receiving it. 1 Kings offers us a very different look at the royal transition. We witness David's failing health and mental status, his son Adonijah proclaiming himself king, Bathsheba conspiring to get the kingship for her son Solomon, David's death bed declaration of Solomon as king, the fear and fleeing of David's other sons, the elimination of all of those who might threaten Solomon's reign, Solomon's seeking and receiving wisdom from God, Solomon's marriage alliance to Pharaoh, demonstrations of Solomon's wisdom and finally the grandeur of Solomon's reign.

**Brief Summary:** the contrast between Chronicles and Samuel/Kings is on full display in these two stories. While they each tell the tale of the transition of the kingship they offer us very different views. I would argue that the older, and original view is that taken by 1 Kings. In this story we watch David decline from a once great warrior to a man who cannot keep himself warm or have sex with the young woman who had been brought in to keep him company. The implication is that David is slipping both physically and mentally. He is open to manipulation. This sets the stage for a contest between brothers for the crown.

Adonija is the oldest son and has demonstrated loyalty to dad. He assumes that he will be crowned king and begins to take on royal airs. Bathsheba knows what that means for her son Solomon, death. She then conspires with the prophet Nathan, to have David declare Solomon as king. What is left open ended in this story is whether or not David had actually promised her that Solomon would be king. Regardless, Bathsheba and Nathan convince David to declare Solomon to be the rightful ruler. This he does. Then in one last act of vengeance David has Solomon promise to kill his enemies. Solomon not only then dispatches his father's enemies, but he eliminates anyone who might challenge his rule. In these acts we watch the ruthlessness of the new king.

In the Chronicle stories we witness a very different story. In this version there is no messiness at all. In fact, if this were our only story of the transition, we would not even know that Solomon had any brothers or that there had been any succession issues at all. As we have noted before, Chronicles offers us a sanitized version of events. Here, David is in full control of all of his faculties until the very end. He understands that he needs to name a successor and so names Solomon in a very public ceremony. He also raises all of the funds for the new Temple, prepares the blue prints and hands everything over to Solomon. Though Chronicles offers us a rose-colored view, it does not pass over all the problematic issues. We learn that Solomon married an Egyptian princess and he made sacrifices at the high places at which the northern tribes of Israel worshipped. While each of these were political necessities (cementing an alliance with Egypt and with the northern tribes) they were later frowned upon. The one story that links these two strands is Solomon's desire for, and reception of wisdom.

1. What political purpose could you see as a possible reason for cleaning up the transition between David and Solomon?
2. Does the inter-palace intrigue strike you as odd or out of place in this story?
3. How do you square Solomon's wisdom with his ruthlessness?