

David Established as King (1 Chr 11-12)

Building a House for God's Name — Studies in 1 & 2 Chronicles

I. INTRODUCTION

A. These two chapters provide a stunning portrait of the events surrounding David's coronation as king over all of Israel. In these chapters, the author of Chronicles is attempting to show the theological and thematic elements that went into David's growing favor as king over God's people. It is important to note that these chapters are not chronological in their presentation of the material.

B. As a section these chapters are presented in such a manner as to give highlight to two predominant themes:

1. **God's favor toward David:** We see throughout these chapters the outworking (small at first and growing to *all Israel*) of the statement made in 1 Chronicles 11.9 that David grew greater and greater because the Lord of hosts was with him. The Chronicler is presenting these chapters in such a way that we experience the growing momentum of David's success that leads to a season of national unity and abundance under his leadership. However, the author wants his readers to be sure that the success is not merely because of David's greatness or because of his leadership prowess — but rather because in and through David's ascension to the throne, God was establishing his purposes for his people.

⁹And David became greater and greater, for the Lord of hosts was with him. ¹⁰Now these are the chiefs of David's mighty men, who gave him strong support in his kingdom, together with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the Lord concerning Israel. (1 Chr 11.9-10)

2. **Leadership lessons for pursuing God's purposes:** These chapters also provide several remarkable "leadership lessons" from David's life that demonstrate a heart posture that is oriented toward seeking to fulfill God's purposes. The Chronicler highlights these leadership realities as ideals for those who are called to build God's house and pursue his purposes — particularly in a season of transition.

C. These chapters demonstrate in a theological and thematic way the events that were happening during the fourteen-year period between David's exile from the court of Saul (1 Sam 20-2 Sam 2), the seven years of contention with the house of Saul as he was king over Judah alone (2 Sam 2-4), until the time he was made king over all of Israel (2 Sam 5). Unlike the books of Samuel, the Chronicler is less concerned with the historical narrative of those events and more concerned with showing the momentum and increase of David's favor among Israel by highlighting how loyalty was granted to him through this period of transition.

D. Outline of 1 Chronicles 11-12

1. **All Israel** anoints David as king (11.1-3)
2. David and **all Israel** take Jerusalem (11.4-9)
3. David's support: God rallies support from **all Israel** (11.10-12.39)
 - a. Title to the section (11.10)
 - b. David's mighty men (11.11-47)
 - c. David at Ziklag (12.1-22)
 - d. David at Hebron (12.23-40)

II. DAVID AND ALL ISRAEL TAKE JERUSALEM (11.4-9)

A. After narrating David's anointing by all Israel (11.1-3), the Chronicler moves immediately to emphasize David's capture of Jerusalem as his capital city.

⁴And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem... ⁶David said, "Whoever strikes the Jebusites first shall be chief and commander." And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, so he became chief. ⁷So David lived in the stronghold; therefore it was called the city of David (1 Chr 11.4, 6-7)

- B. The Chronicler highlights *four* different names of Jerusalem in the course of two verses: *Jerusalem* (the name of the city in Israel’s history), *Jebus* (the ancient name of the city under the rule of the Jebusites); *the city of David* (highlighting the importance of this city to David and his kingdom), and *Zion* (emphasizing the spiritual importance of the city in God’s purposes).
- C. In capturing Jerusalem, David was finally obedient to God’s commands to Israel to drive out the inhabitants of the land. He did this by driving out the Jebusites nearly 500 years after the initial conquest under Joshua (cf. Josh 18.28; Judg 19.10-11).
- D. The final verse of this section gives an important insight into the Chronicler’s understanding of these events. We are not to read of the momentum and increase surrounding David’s kingdom and presume that it is because of his own gifts, strength, or charisma. Rather, we see that David’s favor was enlarged *precisely* because the Lord of hosts was with him.

III. DAVID’S MIGHTY MEN (I CHR II.10-47)

- A. This section outlines the chiefs of David’s group of “mighty men” — those who were gathered to him to lead, partner with, and support him in accomplishing the assignment God had given him. The purpose of this section is to see that God provides his people with *strong support* by sending courageous, gifted, and faithful leaders to provide help along the way.

¹⁰Now these are the chiefs of David’s mighty men, who gave him strong support in his kingdom (I Chr II.10)

⁹For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him (I Chr I6.9)

- B. Many of the exploits of this section are intended to demonstrate a particular way of viewing the natural events of the world. Each of these men has done mighty things in pursuit of God’s purposes — yet, it is clear that they have been helped by the Lord in each of them.
- C. Jashobeam wielded his spear against 300 men at one time.

¹¹Jashobeam, a Hachmonite, was chief of the three. He wielded his spear against 300 whom he killed at one time. (I Chr II.11)

- D. Eleazar took his stand in a barley field, pushing back the encroaching Philistines and keeping God’s land.

¹²Eleazar the son of Dodo... ¹³He was with David at Pas-dammim when the Philistines were gathered there for battle. There was a plot of ground full of barley, and the men fled from the Philistines. ¹⁴But he took his stand in the midst of the plot and defended it and killed the Philistines. And the Lord saved them by a great victory. (I Chr II.12-14)

- E. This section gives a window into how David’s men perceived him (their loyalty and their willingness to risk their own lives for his sake) — while also showing David’s honor of their sacrifices.

¹⁵Three of the thirty chief men went down to the rock to David at the cave of Adullam, when the army of the Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁶David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then at Bethlehem. ¹⁷And David said longingly, “Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate!” ¹⁸Then the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate and took it and brought it to David. But David would not drink it. He poured it out to the Lord ¹⁹and said, “Far be it from me before my God that I should do this. Shall I drink the lifeblood of my men? For at the risk of their lives they brought it.” (I Chr II.15-19)

- F. Abishai also killed 300 men with his spear.

²⁰Now Abishai, the brother of Joab, was chief of the thirty. And he wielded his spear against 300 men and killed them and won a name beside the three. (I Chr II.20)

G. Benaiah killed a giant by disarming him and killing him with his own spear.

²²And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was a valiant man of Kabzeel, a doer of great deeds. He struck down two heroes of Moab. He also went down and struck down a lion in a pit on a day when snow had fallen. ²³And he struck down an Egyptian, a man of great stature, five cubits tall. The Egyptian had in his hand a spear like a weaver's beam, but Benaiah went down to him with a staff and snatched the spear out of the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear. (1 Chr II.22-23)

IV. THE MEN WHO CAME TO ZIKLAG (1 CHR 12.1-22)

- A. At the beginning of chapter 12, the Chronicler introduces a “flashback” to the time when David was fleeing from Saul — hiding among the Philistines in the city of Ziklag (cf. 1 Sam 27-30). This section is designed to show that even while Saul was still king, there were people who knew and understood what God was doing and began to throw their lot in with his purposes (represented in David).
- B. One of the remarkable highlights of this section is that we see two waves of Benjaminites (Saul's own kinsmen) come to David during this season (12.1-7, 16-18). This would have been done at great cost to their own reputation, potential future, and even their lives. Yet, they considered the “shame” of aligning with God's purposes as worth bearing.
- C. The picture of the Gadites coming to David is intended to remind the reader of the initial crossing into the Promised Land. The Chronicler is emphasizing for the reader that this moment is charged with the potential of fulfilling God's purposes — just as they were in the initial days of the conquest.

¹⁵These are the men who crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it was overflowing all its banks, and put to flight all those in the valleys, to the east and to the west (1 Chr II.15)

¹⁴So when the people set out from their tents to pass over the Jordan with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, ¹⁵and as soon as those bearing the ark had come as far as the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest)... (Josh 3.14-15)

D. David required that those coming to him be “equally yoked” in his vision.

¹⁷David went out to meet them and said to them, “If you have come to me in friendship to help me, my heart will be joined to you, but if to betray me to my adversaries, although there is no wrong in my hands, then may the God of our fathers see and rebuke you.” ¹⁸Then the Spirit clothed Amasai, chief of the thirty, and he said, “We are yours, O David, and with you, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to your helpers! For your God helps you.” (1 Chr 12.17-18)

V. ALL ISRAEL COMES TO DAVID AT HEBRON (1 CHR 12.23-40)

- A. In this section we are overwhelmed by the wave of support that is shown for David as the kingdom is ripped from the hand of Saul and his house and given over to another. The sheer number of troops and families who come to David to make him king is intended to show that his support has reached critical mass.
- B. The sons of Issachar possessed unique understanding and wisdom of how to respond — and lead the whole of their tribe and household to pursue the things of the Lord.

³²Of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 200 chiefs, and all their kinsmen under their command (1 Chr 12.32)

C. The last portrait in this section is of a unified people experiencing the joy, delight, and abundance of alignment with God's purposes.

³⁸All these... came to Hebron with a whole heart... all the rest of Israel were of a single mind... ³⁹eating and drinking... ⁴⁰for there was joy in Israel (1 Chr 12.38-40)

VI. THEMATIC SIGNIFICANCE OF I CHRONICLES 11-12

- A. 1 Chronicles 11-12 deal with the time in Israel's history during a remarkable transition between the reigns of Saul and David. Although the Chronicler does not narrate the events surrounding the time of tension between these two houses (a period that lasted for over fourteen years), he is seeking to demonstrate the nature of what God did to change the allegiance of the nation from Saul to David.
- B. These chapters give us many thematic insights into living in transitional, or even liminal times. They speak to theological perspectives of navigating (both among leaders and among the people) of navigating "in-between" seasons when the old way is dying but the new way is not yet established. In these kinds of moments, God often leads in similar ways, and these chapters provide us with many insights into God's leadership and our response in such moments.
- C. **God uses the "days of small beginnings"**: Throughout the Scripture, we see that when God is at work in a new way, it always happens in small and seemingly insignificant ways. This requires that we have the *faith* to perceive what God is doing, the *courage* to align ourselves with his work, and the *patient endurance* to stay the course through hardship, opposition, and insignificance.

1. It is easy to *despise* the days when things are small, hard, and unpraised in the eyes of many. We often believe that when God is at work, it will "feel" more significant or important.

⁹The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent me to you. ¹⁰For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. (Zech 4.9-10)

2. Do we have eyes to see what God is at work doing, and do we have the courage to "go out" to be a part of it — even in places where it is costly to our reputation, our comfort, our lifestyles, etc.?

- D. **God rallies the people**: It is clear throughout this section that **God** is the one working behind all of these events. The reason that David is growing greater and greater is *only because* the Lord of hosts is with him, and that people were simply responding to what God was at work doing (cf. 11.10; 12.18, 23).

¹⁴And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel... and the spirit of Joshua... and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God (Hag 1.14)

- E. **God calls people to partner with his purposes**: These chapters demonstrate that God uses really natural means to accomplish his perfect supernatural purposes. There is a dynamic interplay between the activities of people and the activities of God throughout these chapters.

1. God honors the labors and the efforts of people as they seek to walk out good works done in partnership with his grace.

⁵when the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden... and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. (1 Cor 4.5)

2. God is looking for people who will stand courageously with his purposes. The ability to lead in the day of visitation is cultivated in the days of hiddenness.

¹³Be strong, and let us use our strength for our people and for the cities of our God, and may the Lord do what seems good to him. (1 Chr 19.13)

- F. **God desires his people to be 'equally yoked' in vision**: There is a dynamic interplay between David and the people throughout this section. David has been called by God to lead, but he cannot do it alone. We see in this passage there is a blessing that comes from the "whole hearted" and "single minded" pursuit of a vision together (12.38-40; cf. Ps 133).