

1 Chronicles Chapter 17

Having accompanied the Ark to its place, and having praised the Lord for it, and been refreshed with food (see 2 Sam. 6:19).

"And David returned to bless his house": His family; the Targum is, "to bless the people; (see 2 Sam. 6:20).

Verses 1-8: Ancient kings in this part of the world often built great monuments in homage to the deity they believed was responsible for their royal position. The longing David expressed to build a temple for the Lord seemed motivated by a genuine desire to honor the One who had truly appointed him the "ruler over" His "people" and "made ... a name" for this former shepherd.

The section (of 1-27), recounts God's bestowing the Davidic Covenant. For a full explanation (see notes on 2 Sam. chapter 7).

(2 Samuel 7:1 and 11), adds that God had and would give David rest from all of his enemies.

1 Chronicles 17:1 "Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in a house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD [remaineth] under curtains."

In both texts the story of this chapter naturally follows that of the removal of the Ark. Although the events themselves appear to belong to a later period of David's reign, "when the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies" (2 Sam. 7:1; compare 1 Chron. 17:8).

(1 Chronicles 17:11-14), indicates some time before the birth of Solomon, but the date cannot be more exactly determined.

"That David": Thrice in (1 Chron. 17:1-2), for which Samuel has "the king." The chronicler loves the name of his ideal sovereign.

"Sat": Dwelt.

"A house": The house, that which Hiram's craftsmen had built (1 Chron. 14:1).

"Of cedars": A vivid allusion to the splendor of the palace, with its doors, walls, and ceilings of cedar wood. "Cedar of Labnana" (Lebanon), was in great request with the Assyrian monarchs of a later age for palace building.

"Under curtains": I.e., in a tent (Habakkuk 3:7). Samuel has, "dwelleth amid the curtain".

David is very pleased with his own home made with cedar. He is also pleased with the Ark of the Covenant being in Jerusalem now. David did not want to have a more expensive house to live in

himself than the house the Ark was in. He was deeply convicted that he wanted the LORD's house to be greater than his own. Nathan is spoken of specifically here as the prophet. The eighth son of David was also named Nathan, but this does not mean him. In fact, David's son could have been named for Nathan, the prophet. David had great respect for the prophet Nathan.

1 Chronicles 17:2 "Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that [is] in thine heart; for God [is] with thee."

According to Hebrew ideas, the heart was the seat of the mind and will, as well as of the emotions. But even the great Greek Aristotle, seven centuries later than David, supposed the brain to be merely a kind of cooling counterpoise to the heat of the liver.

"God": Samuel, "Jehovah;" but in last verse," Ark of God.

Nathan speaks hastily here. He knows that David loves the LORD in his heart. He knows that this is not just a spur of the moment thing with David. He had thought it out, and it was his desire to build a house for the LORD. God is with David.

1 Chronicles 17:3 "And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying,"

The words indicate a dream as the method of communication (Job 4:13; 1 Sam. 27:6).

1 Chronicles 17:4 "Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in:"

Rather, it is not thou that shalt build me the house to dwell in. Samuel, interrogatively, implying a negation, "Wilt thou build me a house for me to dwell in?" The chronicler, thinking of the famous Temple of Solomon, writes, "Since the day that I brought up Israel": Out of Egypt," (Samuel), unto this day. The construction, as compared with Samuel, is simplified, and the sentence abbreviated.

1 Chronicles 17:5 "For I have not dwelt in a house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone from tent to tent, and from [one] tabernacle [to another]."

"But have gone": Literally, and I became from tent to tent, and from dwelling. This is clearly too brief for sense; some words must have fallen out, or the reading of Samuel may be original here. The phrase "and I became" almost demands a participle, and the one actually read in Samuel may be here disguised under the expression translated "from tent." A slight further change (in the prepositions), will give the sense: "And I continued walking in a tent and in a dwelling." Perhaps, however, the original text was, "and I walked from tent to tent, and from dwelling to dwelling;" alluding to the various sanctuaries anciently recognized, such as Beth-el (Judges 20:18; Judges 20:26); Mizpeh (Judges 11:11; 1 Sam. 10:17), and Shiloh. The word "dwelling" (mishkān), is a more general term than tent. It includes the sacred tent and its surrounding court.

(2 Sam. 7:14-17), adds new material.

Perhaps when Nathan got alone that night, the Word of the LORD came to him. Sometimes, the desires of our heart to do for the LORD, are not the exact plan He has for us. David's intentions were good, but he had not been chosen of God to do that particular task. This would be a difficult thing to tell David, especially since he had already told him to go ahead. Nathan spoke before he had the Word from the LORD. Now, he must go and tell David of this. The LORD is saying, that He is perfectly satisfied to dwell in the tent that David prepared for him. He had dwelt in the tabernacle, which was really a tent, on their journey to the Promised Land.

1 Chronicles 17:6 "Whosoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying, Why have ye not built me an house of cedars?"

The judges of Israel. Samuel has "tribes." The term "judges" would be more intelligible in later times, and has probably been substituted for the more difficult original expression. The following clause seems to refer to individual rulers, but is not really incompatible with a reference to the ascendancy or hegemony of different tribes at different epochs of Israelite history (compare Gen. 49:10; 1 Chron. 28:4; Psalm 78:67-68). The word "tribe" (shēbet), might only denote clan, or house (as in Judges 20:12, Hebrew).

"To feed": Shepherd, or tend, i.e., to govern (compare Psalm 78:71).

Had God wanted a house of cedar, He would have told the judges. God had never asked anyone to build him a house of cedar. God brought prosperity and peace during the reign of each of the judges.

1 Chronicles 17:7 "Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the shepcote, [even] from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over my people Israel:"

"I took thee from the shepcote": (compare Psalm 78:70-72). The pronoun is emphatic: "I it was who took thee from the pasture."

"From following": Hebrew, from behind. Samuel has the older form of this preposition.

"That thou shouldest be": That thou mightest become.

"Ruler": Nāgîd (1 Chron. 9:11; 9:20; compare 1 Chron. 11:2).

God had chosen David, when he was a humble little shepherd boy, and anointed him to be king of all Israel. This shepcote was out with the sheep. God elevated David to what he was at this time. God made David king in Saul's stead.

1 Chronicles 17:8 "And I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have made thee a name like the name of the great men that [are] in the earth."

Same phrase as in (1 Chron. 17:6). "Whithersoever," i.e., throughout thy whole career.

"And have cut off all thine enemies": This appears to refer not merely to the death of Saul and the overthrow of his house, but also to the successful conclusion of some of the wars recorded in the following chapters (compare also 1 Chron. 14:8-17).

"And have made thee": Rather, and I will make thee.

"The great men": The sovereigns of Egypt and Babylon, of Tyre, and the Hittite states.

God had been with David in the past, and would continue to be with him. God helped him, when he was running from Saul. He also helped him gain the kingdom. God would continue to bless him as king of Israel. His name was great among his enemies, because the enemies knew God was with him.

1 Chronicles 17:9 "Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the beginning,"

(Compare Exodus 15:17; Psalm 44:2-3). Although Israel had effected a settlement in Canaan, the history seems to show that down to the times of David the tribal boundaries were subject to great fluctuation, and the inroads of surrounding peoples made their tenure very uncertain.

"Them ... they ... their": Hebrew, "him ... he ... his". Israel, the subject, being singular.

"In their place": In his own stead, or fixed habitation (compare homestead, farmstead).

"Shall be moved": Shall be troubled, or disturbed.

"Children of wickedness": Sons of wickedness, i.e., wicked men; like "sons of Belial", (worthlessness).

"Waste them": An Aramaic usage of the verb. Samuel: "afflict them," which seems original (compare Gen. 15:13).

"As at the beginning": Referring to the bondage in Egypt.

The place that God had chosen for Israel was the Promised Land. It was the inheritance on the western side of Jordan that he had given to the nine and a half tribes, and the land on the eastern side of Jordan that He had given to the two and a half tribes of Israel. This will be their inheritance forever. God will be their God, and the city of their God will be Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 17:10 "And since the time that I commanded judges [to be] over my people Israel. Moreover I will subdue all thine enemies. Furthermore I tell thee that the LORD will build thee a house."

"And since the time" ... Israel": Moreover ... Furthermore. Revised Version, "and as from the day ... Israel"; and Moreover:

"Subdue all thine enemies": Samuel, (R.V.) cause thee to rest from all thine enemies.

"Build thee a house": Samuel, make thee a house, the house meant being a dynasty, and not a building.

God gave protection in the time of the judges. God would even bless the time of the kings, if they would remain faithful to him. God fought the battles for Israel, when they were keeping His commandments. God had promised that there would always be a king on the throne of Israel from the house of David.

Verses 11-14: For the Davidic covenant (see the note on 2 Sam. 7:12-16).

God's promise that He would "establish" David's "throne forever" referred ultimately to Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David (Psalm 89:20-37; Heb. 1:5). God would fulfill this promise despite repeated unfaithfulness among David's descendants. Soon, God would put Solomon on the throne.

1 Chronicles 17:11 "And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go [to be] with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom."

In accordance with the promise, "The Lord will build thee a house" (1 Chron. 17:10). The phrase is wanting in Samuel, and should probably be supplied, with LXX.

"Be expired": Are fulfilled (perfect); Samuel has imperfect tense.

"That thou must go to be with thy fathers": Literally, to go with thy fathers; an unusual expression, for which Samuel has the ordinary, "and thou lie down with thy fathers" (compare 1 Kings 2:2; "Go the way of all the earth").

"Which shall be": (shall arise or come, Gen. 17:16), of thy sons. Samuel has the more original, "which shall go forth from thy bowels." The chronicler has paraphrased this, to suit the taste of a later age.

"His kingdom": Hebrew, malkûthô, a later word than the synonym in Samuel (mamlakhtô).

David's reign was for 40 years, including the time he ruled in just Judah. Solomon's reign would be for 40 years, as well. God will establish the reign of Solomon.

1 Chronicles 17:12 "He shall build me a house, and I will stablish his throne for ever."

Samuel, “for my name” (see 1 Kings 8:29; 9:3).

"His throne": Samuel, “throne of his kingdom”, a characteristic abridgment.

This is a promise to David that God will indeed, allow Solomon to build the house that he had wanted to build. God will establish peace in the kingdom, and there will be a time of peace to build the temple.

1 Chronicles 17:13 "I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took [it] from [him] that was before thee:"

A parallel passage (in 2 Sam. 7:14), provides additional information concerning the discipline of David’s descendants. That description is likely omitted here in order to remain focused on the throne of David.

Hebrew, I, (on my part), will become a father unto him, and he (on his part), shall become a son to me (compare Psalm 2:7). After these words, Samuel adds: “If he commit iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.” The omission is probably not a mere abridgment. The reference in this prophecy looks beyond Solomon to Him of whom the greatest princes of the house of David were but imperfect types. The warning here omitted was amply fulfilled in the history of Solomon and his successors but it could not apply to the true Anointed of Jehovah, and is therefore suppressed as a transitory element in the prophecy.

"And I will not take my mercy away": Samuel, “and my mercy shall not depart”, the same verb in a different form. But the LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate there agree with Chronicles.

"As I took it": (Away).

"From him that was before you": Samuel, “as I took it away from, said whom I took away from before thee; “repeating the same verb thrice. Our text is probably more correct, So Vulgate and LXX virtually. But Syriac, “My mercies shall not depart from him, as I made (them), depart from Saul who was before thee.”

Saul displeased God so greatly, that God had taken the kingdom away from him. God anointed David king before the death of Saul. The promise to David was that God would not deal as harshly with Solomon, as He did with Saul.

1 Chronicles 17:14 "But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore."

Hebrew, make him stand in mine house and in my kingdom. Samuel, “and thine house and thy kingdom shall be maintained for ever before thee; thy throne,” etc. Where, however, the LXX and Syriac have “before me,” which agrees better with our text. The change of persons in our verse brings out more clearly the theocratic nature of the Davidic kingdom. Solomon and his successors were to reign as vicegerents of Jehovah.

The King that reigns on the throne forever that descends from David in the flesh is the Lord Jesus Christ. This, I believe is speaking of the reign of Jesus.

1 Chronicles 17:15 "According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David."

The matter of this prophecy (1 Chron. 17:3-15), undoubtedly rests upon authentic tradition. Neither the compiler of Samuel, however, nor the chronicler professes to give an exact report of the words of Nathan, as if they had been taken down on the spot, as they were uttered, by some shorthand reporter. The modern demand for literal accuracy was unknown to Oriental antiquity. Where the two narratives vary. Sometimes Samuel, sometimes the Chronicle, contains the more original form of the tradition (1 Chron. 17:15).

(2 Samuel 7:17), in fact, seems to imply that the essence rather than the actual words of the oracle is given.

We remember, at the beginning of this, that God was speaking to David through the prophet Nathan.

Verses 16-27: David" again shows himself to be a man of spiritual sensitivity, who was always ready to go to "God" in prayer, thanksgiving, and praise.

David's humble response ("Who am I?"), vastly differed from the arrogant attitude expressed by so many of the kings that preceded and followed him (1 and 2 kings). Although David was far from perfect, God called him "a man after His own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14). David's godly character resulted in God's blessings.

1 Chronicles 17:16 "And David the king came and sat before the LORD, and said, Who [am] I, O LORD God, and what [is] mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?"

Samuel has the word here supplied in italics. David says, "My unlooked for exaltation was not enough: thou hast also revealed to me the far future of my offspring."

"O God": Here and at the end of the verse Samuel again has "my Lord, Jehovah."

"Also": Samuel has this word in the text.

"And hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree": The Hebrew is obscure. Samuel has simply, "and this *is* the law of man, my Lord Jehovah." The word "law" (tôrāh), has been supposed to mean manner or custom in this place, but it is not used in that sense elsewhere. Its strict sense is teaching (compare Isaiah 8:16; 8:20), where the oracles delivered to the prophet are called (tôrāh.) The rendering therefore is, and this (thy gracious revelation), is a lesson to mankind. Our text demands one slight alteration, in accordance with this. Read tôrāh for tôr, and

then we may translate: “and thou regardest me (LXX ἐπεῖδές; compare Luke 1:48), like man’s teaching (Psalm 32:8), that bringeth up (same verb as Ezek. 19:2).

"O Lord God": That is to say, thy revelation is a part of my moral discipline, like the instruction which men give their children. David was not allowed to build the Temple, which was so far a check; but encouragement was added to the prohibition by the wisdom of his heavenly Teacher. If we might assume the other sense of tôrâh, we might render: and thou regardest me after the manner of men that exalteth, that is, as human benefactors help on those whom they favor. The old versions give no help.

Whether this is saying that David sat before the Ark, which symbolized the presence of God, or not, I cannot say. He, at least, was praying to the LORD. He was so humbled by this that he asked the LORD, "Who am I, that this should happen to me"?

1 Chronicles 17:17 "And [yet] this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast [also] spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O LORD God."

(See the note on 2 Sam. 7:19).

David was aware that this promise from God goes far beyond the next generation. David could not imagine why God would have chosen him for such great honor. David realized that the things that had already been done for him by God, was as if he was a great man. He is saying, I am no more than a shepherd, how would I deserve this? Now, the prospect of the kingdom remaining in his descendants forever was almost more than he could imagine.

1 Chronicles 17:18 "What can David [speak] more to thee for the honor of thy servant? for thou knowest thy servant."

Samuel has the omitted “speak” (compare Psalm 120:3). The word translated “for the honor,” may be a corruption of that for “to speak.”

"Of your servant?" The Hebrew term is in the accusative case, and should be omitted as a mistaken repetition of the same word at the end of the verse.

David was aware that all of the things he had said were useless, because God knew everything about him already. He is saying, "What could I say that you do not already know"?

1 Chronicles 17:19 "O LORD, for thy servant's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness, in making known all [these] great things."

"For thy servant's sake": The parallel place reads, "For thy word's sake." This reading is superior, and well suits the connection, suggesting also whether the first occurrence of the word "servant" in the previous verse might not be similarly explained. The similarity of the characters of the words in the Hebrew would render easy the exchange of the one word for the other.

All of this is because of the great love that God had for David. David was aware that he did not deserve this honor. God was doing it for David's sake because he loved God in his heart. God loved David, was the only reason God promised him this.

1 Chronicles 17:20 "O LORD, [there is] none like thee, neither [is there any] God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears."

One or two words are omitted (see 2 Sam. 7:22). "Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God, for there is none," etc. (compare Isa. 46:9; 45:18; 45:5-6, Deut. 33:26); and for the end of the verse, (Psalm 44:1; Exodus 10:2; Deut. 4:9).

David had been raised up to believe in God. He was from a Hebrew family. They had taught David about the wonderful things God had done for His people. Even all of those wonderful things he had heard of God, did not compare with this. David was overwhelmed by the greatness of God. David reaffirmed his faith in God, and Him alone.

1 Chronicles 17:21 "And what one nation in the earth [is] like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem [to be] his own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people, whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt?"

Better as R.V., who "is like thy people Israel": A nation that is alone in the earth. Compare Targum, a people unique and chosen in the earth.

"Of greatness and terribleness": R.V. "by great and terrible things".

This tiny little nation had become great, because God had chosen them for His people. It was God who went and redeemed them out of Egypt. We have said over and over, that it was the God of the Israelites that the other nations feared. Even the nations around them realized that Israel's God was God. His greatness and terribleness brought many of them to that conclusion. Moses went as God's agent to redeem the people, but it was actually God who redeemed them.

1 Chronicles 17:22 "For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever; and thou, LORD, becamest their God."

Literally, And Thou gavest (Samuel, confirmed it). Thy people Israel unto Thyself for a people. Our reading is probably a result of partial obliteration.

"And thou, Lord": Literally, and Thou, Jehovah, becamest unto them for a God (see Gen. 17:7-8; 28:21; Exodus 6:3; 6:7).

God had chosen them to be His people and all He wanted from them was to be their God. He wanted them to love Him enough to keep His commandments.

1 Chronicles 17:23 "Therefore now, LORD, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house be established for ever, and do as thou hast said."

Samuel adds “God.”

"Let the thing ... be established": Let the word (promise), be upheld, maintained, assured. Samuel has a different verb, “establish thou.”

This is a statement from David that he wished it to be just as God had said.

1 Chronicles 17:24 "Let it even be established, that thy name may be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts [is] the God of Israel, [even] a God to Israel: and [let] the house of David thy servant [be] established before thee."

“Yea, let it be assured.” This repetition is wanting in Samuel.

"The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel": “Jehovah Sabaoth, God of Israel, is God to Israel.” “God of Israel” is not read here in Samuel, but in the next verse.

"And let the house of David ... be established": “Let ... be” is wanting in the Hebrew, and the sentence might be taken as part of what men are to say hereafter in praise of God: “The house of David thy servant is established before thee.” Samuel, however, inserts the verb “let it become,” or “shall become.”

David realized that all of the honor and glory should go to the LORD. David had decided that God would always be his God. David would like to promise that the house of Israel would be faithful, but he could not promise that.

1 Chronicles 17:25 "For thou, O my God, hast told thy servant that thou wilt build him a house: therefore thy servant hath found [in his heart] to pray before thee."

Samuel: “Jehovah Sabaoth, God of Israel.”

"Hast told thy servant that thou wilt build him a house": Literally, hast uncovered the ear of Thy servant, to build him a house. Samuel has the more usual construction: “saying, A house I will build thee” (compare 1 Sam. 9:15).

"Hath found in his heart": Rather, hath found his heart, i.e., hath taken courage. The noun is expressed in Samuel. As to its omission here (compare 1 Chron. 14:1). The phrase is unique in Hebrew.

"To pray": Samuel adds, “this prayer.”

It was almost as if David was saying, "You have promised me all these things and I know you keep your Word". He says, "The least I can do is bring my prayer requests to you". David was very humbled that God would bring this great honor to his house.

1 Chronicles 17:26 "And now, LORD, thou art God, and hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:"

Jehovah, Thou art the (true) God. Samuel: “my Lord Jehovah.” The chronicler omits the clause which follows in Samuel: “and thy words become truth” (prove true).

1 Chronicles 17:27 "Now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever: for thou blessest, O LORD, and [it shall be] blessed for ever."

He is therefore encouraged to ask a blessing because God had intimated to him that he had blessings in store for him and his family.

“Thou blessest, O Lord”: And therefore, unto thee shall all flesh come for a blessing. Unto thee do I come for the blessing promised to me. And he is therefore earnest for the blessing, because those whom God blesseth are truly and eternally blessed. Thou blessest, and it shall be blessed. Men can but beg the blessing, it is God that commands it; what he designs, he effects; what he promises, he performs; saying and doing are not two things with him. Nay,

“It shall be blessed for ever”: His blessings shall not be revoked from the faithful, and the benefits conferred by them are such as will survive time and days. David’s prayer concludes as God’s promise did (1 Chron. 17:14), with that which is for ever. God’s word looks at things eternal, and so should our desires and hopes.

This is again, a re-affirming that he believed in the LORD with all his heart. The promises that God made David were so fabulous, it seemed too good to be true, but David knew it was. He accepted the blessings God had showered on his house.

1 Chronicles Chapter 17 Questions

1. In verse 1, David said he lived in a house of _____.
2. He also said the Ark of the Covenant remaineth under _____.
3. Who is the prophet in verse 1?
4. In verse 2, what does Nathan tell David to do?
5. What was the desire of David's heart?
6. What did the Word of God tell Nathan to do?
7. In verse 5, what reason does God give David, for not wanting him to build Him a house?
8. Who had God specifically mentioned that He did not tell to build Him a house?
9. God had chosen David, when he was a humble _____.
10. Who was David to rule over as king?

11. Where was the place God had chosen for His people to dwell?
12. The city of their God will be _____.
13. Who is verse 11 speaking of as David's son?
14. How long did David reign?
15. How long did Solomon reign?
16. Who will build the temple to the LORD?
17. Why had God destroyed Saul?
18. Who is the King who reigns forever?
19. Where did David pray?
20. What had David realized about these promises God had made?
21. Why was it useless for David to speak of himself?
22. David had heard of the greatness of God from where?
23. Why had this tiny little nation of Israel become great?
24. What is David saying in verse 23?
25. What are verses 26 and 27 re-affirming?