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Mark A. Throntveit

Luther Seminary, mthrontv@luthersem.edu

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THE IDEALIZATION OF SOLOMON AS THE GLORIFICATION
OF GOD IN THE CHRONICLER'S ROYAL SPEECHES AND
ROYAL PRAYERS

MARK A. THRONTVEIT

Scholars have long recognized that the books of Kings and Chronicles differ in their depictions of the reign of Solomon.¹ Typical analyses of the deuteronomistic presentation emphasize the division of Solomon's reign into two distinct periods.² The first period (1 Kgs 1-10) is usually seen as a positive portrayal of Solomon that emphasizes his obedience and the blessing that such obedience rewards. The second period (1 Kgs 11) relates Solomon's tragic apostasy, seeing it as the reason for the divine judgment that came in the form of the schism that divided Israel into Northern and Southern Kingdoms. As such, the deuteronomistic portrayal of Solomon functions as yet another factor in the complex exilic explanation of the destruction of Jerusalem. While the positive aspects of the early part of Solomon's reign would encourage those exilic readers with the reminder that the Davidic dynasty had begun in fulfillment of God's promise to David through Nathan, the final chapter in Solomon's story serves to introduce the theme that will occupy the author for the rest of Kings, namely, the failure of the kings to live in accordance

¹ See, for example, the classic expressions of P. R. Ackroyd, "History and Theology in the Writings of the Chronicler," *CTM* 38 (1967) 501-15; R. L. Braun, "The Message of Chronicles: Rally 'Round the Temple," *CTM* 42 (1971) 502-14; *idem*, "Solomonic Apologetic in Chronicles," *JBL* 92 (1973) 503-16; *idem*, "Solomon, the Chosen Temple Builder: The Significance of 1 Chronicles 22, 28, and 29 for the Theology of Chronicles," *JBL* 95 (1976) 581-90; A. M. Brunet, "La theologie du Chroniste: Theocratie et messianisme," *Sacra Pagina* 1 (1959) 384-97. R. B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles* (WBC 15; Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1987) 1-7; D. N. Freedman, "The Chronicler's Purpose," *CBQ* 23 (1961) 436-42; S. Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (BEATAJ 9; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989) 478-89; H. G. M. Williamson, "The Accession of Solomon in the Books of Chronicles," *VT* 26 (1976) 351-61; *idem*, "Eschatology in Chronicles," *TynBul* 28 (1971) 115-54; *idem*, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 192-237.

² R. B. Dillard's summary is especially clear and concise, "The Chronicler's Solomon," *WTJ* 43 (1980) 290-91. A more detailed presentation of the Chronicler's use of Kings in the Solomonic material can be found in S. L. McKenzie, *The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History* (HSM 33; Atlanta: Scholars, 1985) 83-99.

with the covenant, a failure that ultimately results in the catastrophes of 721 and 587, the destruction of Israel and Judah.

Typical analyses of the Chronicler's presentation of Solomon's reign draw attention to the omissions that are immediately evident to anyone familiar with the account in Kings. These tend to cluster at the beginning and the end of the story, most notably the intrigue and violence associated with Solomon's accession (1 Kgs 1-2), his judicial ruling in the case of the harlots (1 Kgs 3:16-28), and the events that characterize his final years as king: marriages to foreign women, cultic apostasy, and conflicts with neighboring kings (1 Kgs 11). This is not to deny that the Chronicler has meticulously "retouched" the portrait he received from his deuteronomistic sources at other junctures in the narrative. The omissions of Solomon's conscription of Israelite labor for the building of the temple (1 Kgs 5:13-18), and the notice that the construction of his own house took nearly twice as long as the building of the temple (1 Kgs 6:38; 7:1), as well as the reversal of the report concerning Solomon's gift of twenty cities to Hiram (1 Kgs 9:10-14) so that Hiram gives twenty cities to Solomon (2 Chr 8:1-2) are clear testimony to tendentious, editorial activity in the central sections of the story. As such, the case is often made that the chronistic presentation "omits or recasts any item that might be taken to suggest less than ideal circumstances."³ Japhet's conclusion in this matter, that the Chronicler has simply replaced 1 Kgs 1-2 with his own account of Solomon's accession (1 Chr 29) and omitted 1 Kgs 11, so that "what remains of Solomon's history is well suited to the Chronicler's own views," while somewhat overstated in light of these other omissions and reworkings of the text, is therefore essentially accurate.⁴

These observations have led to something of a consensus regarding the Chronicler's depiction of Solomon. McConville's is perhaps the most eloquent statement of this consensus position, "The Chronicler's aim in his portrayal of Solomon is to show how God governed the events of history to impart to the kingdom of Israel, at least once, a splendour that was fit to symbolize his own."⁵ Williamson is more concerned to relate the promises made to David, "... the Chronicler wished to present

³ J. M. Miller and J. H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 197.

⁴ S. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993) 632-33.

⁵ J. G. McConville, *I & II Chronicles* (DSB; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) 110.

Solomon as one man who fulfilled the conditions of obedience to the will of God that were necessary for the permanent establishment of the dynasty."⁶

Recent investigations of the Chronicler's presentation have come to similar, positive opinions. Duke's investigation of the rhetorical motivation behind the Chronicler's presentation concludes, "As with the portrayal of David, that of Solomon is positive and idealistic."⁷ While Riley's examination of Solomon from a cultic point of view suggests that the non-monarchical situation of post-exilic Israel demanded a re-evaluation of former kings that emphasized the theological significance of the monarchy at the expense of the political, he still claims that, "In many ways the Chronistic Solomon, cleansed of the sins and failures of the Deuteronomistic History (1 Kgs 11:1-8), provides a picture of the true Davidide."⁸

Recently, this broad consensus that the Chronicler has idealized the figure of Solomon, and therefore his vision of Solomon's reign, has been challenged as "a subjective interpretation" that "does not stand up to close scrutiny," by Kelly, who cites the retention of *Vorlage* material critical of Solomon (2 Chr 10:4, 10-11, 14) as indicative of a more balanced approach by the Chronicler.⁹ Less convincing, for its lack of evidence, is his plea for reading the references to "the records of Nathan the prophet" and "the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite" (2 Chr 9:29) as denoting accounts in 1 Kgs 1 of the accession and consequences of Solomon's apostasy (1 Kgs 11:29-39).¹⁰

My purpose in this essay is to look at this idealization of Solomon through the lens of the literary discourses in Chronicles with a view to

⁶ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, p. 236.

⁷ R. K. Duke, *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler: A Rhetorical Analysis* (JSOTSup 88; Sheffield: JSOT, 1990) 66.

⁸ W. Riley, *King and Cultus in Chronicles: Worship and the Reinterpretation of History* (JSOTSup 160; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993) 96. Mosis's suggestion that Solomon's reign is presented as a "type" of end-time expectation in Chronicles has not won general acceptance; R. Mosis, *Untersuchungen zur Theologie des chronistischen Geschichtswerkes* (FTS 92; Freiburg: Herder, 1973) 164-69, 211-14. For a recent critique of Mosis see B. E. Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles* (JSOTSup 211; Sheffield: JSOT, 1996) 151-53.

⁹ See B. E. Kelly, "Messianic Elements in the Chronicler's Work," *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts* (eds. P. E. Satterthwaite, R. S. Hess and G. J. Wenham; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996) 257-58.

¹⁰ To be fair, Kelly is following Williamson here (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, pp. 236-37) and registers Japhet's challenge of this interpretation (*I & II Chronicles*, p. 646); Kelley, "Messianic Elements," p. 258.

shedding light on the Chronicler's vision of Solomon and his age. Three moments in the narrative, all directly related to the Chronicler's crucial reinterpretation of the promises contained in Nathan's oracle (2 Sam 7 // 1 Chr 17), are especially fruitful in this regard: the dynastic oracle itself; David's recalling of the promises made in the oracle at various junctures in his final addresses; and Solomon's allusions to the oracle at the time of the dedication of the newly built temple.

The importance of the speeches and prayers for discerning the theological intention of the Chronicler needs no justification. Towards the end of the 19th century, Driver concluded his analysis of the speeches by stating, "It would have been interesting to point out how the speeches peculiar to the Chronicler reflect, in almost every case, the interests and point of view of the Chronicler himself; but space has obliged me to confine myself to the linguistic argument."¹¹ Noth's investigation clearly established the view that the Chronicler was responsible for the speeches themselves and Plöger demonstrated their chronistic placement at strategic points in the narrative.¹² These pioneering works in the area of the Chronicler's speeches have been enhanced by the more recent work of Braun, Newsome, Saebø, Mathias, Throntveit, Duke, Mason, and Schniedewind, all in basic agreement as to the use, function, and historicity of these addresses.¹³

1. THE DYNASTIC ORACLE: 1 CHRONICLES 17 // 2 SAMUEL 7

Schniedewind provides us with a convenient starting point for the discussion of this royal speech placed upon the lips of David by the authors of both Samuel and Chronicles:

¹¹ S. R. Driver, "The Speeches in Chronicles," *The Expositor* 1, 5th series (1895) 255.

¹² M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien* (Wiesbaden-Biebrich: Becker, 1943); O. Plöger, "Reden und Gebete im deuteronomistischen und chronistischen Geschichtswerk," *Aus der Spätzeit des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971) 50-66.

¹³ R. Braun, "The Significance of I Chronicles 22, 28, and 29 for the Structure and Theology of the Work of the Chronicler" (dissertation, Concordia Seminary, 1971); J. D. Newsome, "The Chronicler's View of Prophecy" (dissertation, Vanderbilt, 1973); M. Saebø, "Taler og bønner hos Kronisten og I Esra/Nehemja-boken: Noen bemerkninger til et aktuelt tema," *Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift* 83 (1982) 119-32; D. Mathias, "'Levitiske Predigt' und Deuteronomismus," *ZAW* 96 (1984) 23-49; M. A. Throntveit, *When Kings Speak: Royal Speech and Royal Prayer in Chronicles* (SBLDS 93; Atlanta: Scholars, 1987); R. K. Duke, *Persuasive Appeal*; W. M. Schniedewind, *The Word of God in Transition: From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period* (JSOTSup 197; Sheffield: JSOT, 1995); R. Mason, *Preaching the Tradition: Homily and Hermeneutics after the Exile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990).

The Chronicler rewrites and recontextualizes the dynastic oracle so that it justifies the building of the temple and introduces his comprehensive description of the temple and its institutions ... The Chronicler then reappropriates the dynastic oracle within the process of temple building by recalling the dynastic oracle in speeches and narratives.¹⁴

While the Chronicler has been remarkably conservative in his appropriation of the speech one omission and three alterations provide us with some insight into his vision of Solomon.¹⁵

2 Samuel 7:1 ≠ 1 Chronicles 17:1

First, the statement that “YHWH had given him [David] rest from all his enemies,” (2 Sam 7:1) is omitted in 1 Chr 17:1 and a similar notice from 2 Sam 7:11 in 1 Chr 17:10 is reworded. It is certainly possible that this omission is due to the Chronicler’s desire to avoid a chronological conflict with the later references to David’s wars in verse 10 and chapters 18-20. Braun, however, building upon the earlier studies of von Rad and Carlson, has pointed to the significance of this concept of “rest” in Deuteronomy and the deuteronomistic history.¹⁶ He concludes that while the usages of the term cluster around three important events, the conquest of the land by Joshua, the dynastic promise to David, and the building of the temple by Solomon, “the singular importance of *menuha* for our study is most apparent from Deut 12, where the unification of the cult is specifically related to Israel’s rest in the promised land.”¹⁷ For the Chronicler, this concept of a God-given rest in the promised land was the necessary prerequisite for the building of the temple, since it marked the fulfillment of the promises to Israel. As such, it is regularly applied to

¹⁴ Schniedewind, *Word of God*, pp. 143-44. His judicious discussion of the relative merit of the LXX, especially over against the somewhat optimistic use of the Greek tradition by McKenzie, is as refreshing as it is provocative.

¹⁵ Comparisons of these parallel passages are legion with debate raging over priority, *Vorlage*, and the lack or presence of *Tendenz*. See H. van den Busche, “Le texte de la prophétie de Nathan sur la dynastie davidique (II Samuel VII-I Chronicles XVII),” *ETL* 24 (1948) 354-94; McKenzie, *Chronicler’s Use*, pp. 63-64; and Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, pp. 132-33. This study agrees with Lemke that the chronistic divergences from Samuel derive from the Chronicler’s agenda rather than disturbances in the underlying texts; W. E. Lemke, “Synoptic Studies in the Chronicler’s History” (dissertation, Harvard Divinity School, 1963) 40-46.

¹⁶ Braun, “Chosen Temple Builder,” pp. 582-86. G. von Rad, “There Remains a Rest for the People of God: An Investigation of a Biblical Conception,” *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (ed. E. W. T. Dicken: Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1966) 94-102; R. A. Carlson, *David, the Chosen King* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964) 97-106.

¹⁷ Braun, “Chosen Temple Builder,” p. 583.

Solomon, the chosen temple builder (especially in the royal speeches at 1 Chr 22:8-9, 18; 28:2; 2 Chr 14:6), and deleted from descriptions of David in the *Vorlage*.¹⁸ In addition it provides a crucial interpretive key for the other modifications made in this passage.

2 Samuel 7:5 ≠ 1 Chronicles 17:4

A second alteration of the dynastic oracle in Kings occurs in verse 4. The Chronicler recasts YHWH's rhetorical question, "*Shall you build me a house for me to live in?*" (2 Sam 7:5) into the indicative, "*You shall not build me the house to live in,*" (1 Chr 17:4). While scribal error in either direction between הֵאָחֳזֶה (Samuel) and לֹא אֶחֱזֶה (Chronicles) is possible, the alteration sets the agenda for the rest of the oracle and, at the very least, suggests that a strong contrast is being drawn between David and Solomon with regard to the actual construction of the temple. In this regard the Chronicler's addition of the definite article to the word "house" would seem to argue for a more precise determination of the temple in Jerusalem.¹⁹

Furthermore, no censure of David is intended. As Japhet has demonstrated, only at a later stage in the tradition does the rejection of David's "offer" to build a house for God in verse 1 become a matter of precedence, while for the Chronicler, "the emphasis is different. From the outset the determining factor is that of timing: not you but your successor will build a house. The days of peace and 'rest' have not yet come; when they do my house shall be built."²⁰ As we have seen, the Chronicler's theology of rest and the alterations he makes in his sources that stem from this perspective, indicate that the Chronicler believes those days of peace and rest came in the time of Solomon.

2 Samuel 7:11 ≠ 1 Chronicles 17:10

Yet another alteration is evident in 1 Chr 17:10. The Chronicler's source read, "*YHWH declares to you that YHWH shall make a house for you*" (2 Sam 7:11). Chronicles reads, "*I declare to you YHWH shall build a house for you*" (1 Chr 17:10b). The change to first person is probably insignificant, in that it merely smoothes out the connection between the first person verbs in verses 7-10 and 11-14.²¹ More, however, can be said

¹⁸ For a fuller summary of the theme of rest in Chronicles along similar lines see Kelly, *Retribution*, pp. 196-99.

¹⁹ Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, p. 134.

²⁰ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, pp. 329-30.

²¹ Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, p. 82.

about the change from “make” (עשה) to “build” (בנה). The Samuel text is clearly about the establishment of a family since this verb only appears with “house” with the idiomatic sense, as, for example, when God promises to “give” (עשה) the midwives Shiphrah and Puah “families” (בָּרִים) as a reward for their faithful service (Ex 1:21). By altering his source to “build a house” the Chronicler allows the meaning of the “building of a house” to include both the establishment of a dynasty and the construction of the temple. In addition, the alteration solidifies the literary echoes between “You shall not build me a house” (v 4) and “He shall build me a house” (v 12), both places where the Chronicler has been especially active in his appropriation of the *Vorlage*.

2 Samuel 7:16 ≠ 1 Chronicles 17:4

The passages disagree in a number of instances. Samuel reads, “But *your* house and *your* kingdom shall be made sure forever before [me]; *your* throne shall be made firm forever” (2 Sam 7:16). The contrast in the verse is to Saul and his kingdom, mentioned in the previous verse. The second person pronominal suffixes refer unambiguously to David. The Chronicler radically alters the first two to first person (“my” i.e. “God’s”) and the third to the third person (“his”) so that the promise applies to Solomon, “I shall establish him in *my* house and in *my* kingdom forever and *his* throne shall be made firm forever” (1 Chr 17:14). The changes are indicative of the Chronicler’s differing perspective on the institution of kingship and the role of David and Solomon. In stark contrast to the deuteronomistic view, where David is the paradigmatic ruler to whom subsequent rulers in Judah are compared, the Chronicler sees the united monarchy of David and Solomon as the climactic event in the history of Israel.²²

Interestingly enough, these alterations combine to reveal the concentric structuring of the Chronicler’s texts.²³ Based upon the repetition of the trope “to build a house,” the chronistic structuring is tighter and more unified than that of the *Vorlage*:

A Narrative frame introducing Nathan’s oracle (3-4a)

B “*You* shall not build me the house to dwell in” (4b-6)

X Promise of dynasty: “*The Lord* will build you a house”
(7-10)

²² Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, p. 335.

²³ S. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (FOTL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 153, has noted the probable inclusio provided by שׁב in verses 1 and 16.

B' "He shall build a house for me" (11-14)

A' Narrative frame concluding Nathan's oracle (15)

The narrative frame (A, A') simply serves as an introduction and conclusion for the oracle itself. The inner frame (B, B'), however, contrasts the denial of David's construction of the temple (v 4b) with the indication, at this stage of the narrative somewhat cryptic, that Solomon will indeed be the chosen temple builder (v 12a). Thus, these segments of the passage, when taken together, focus upon the physical building of the temple itself, without obstructing the promise of a secure dynasty in B'. The central segment, indicated by the rhetorical וְעַתָּה ("And now") as well as a second introduction by means of a messenger formula, provides the transition between the dual emphasis on temple and dynasty that has been at the heart of the Chronicler's paranomasia in this section. A historical retrospect of divine favor towards David in the past (vv. 7-8a) is matched by the promise of God's future care and provision for people (vv. 8b-10a) that climaxes in the dynastic promise to David that "YHWH will build you a house" (v 10b).

2. DAVID'S SPEECHES OF ENCOURAGEMENT: 1 CHRONICLES 22, 28 AND 29

The Chronicler has provided much of his unique theological interpretation in the form of fourteen royal speeches that do not have a parallel in the synoptic material contained in Samuel-Kings.²⁴ Saebø has suggested that a primary function of the speeches is to invest the speakers with authority and since only the Chronicler's favorites (David, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah) deliver royal addresses and then only in that part of their reign that is presented in a favorable light (if the particular reign receives a mixed judgment); one would have to agree.²⁵ Almost half of these royal speeches have been placed on the lips of David (1 Chr 13:2-3; 15:2,12-13; 22:6-16; 22:17-19; 28:2-10; 28:20-21; [29:1-5]) and the last five have a direct bearing on the concerns of this investigation.

²⁴ See Throntveit, *When Kings Speak*, pp. 11-50. Mason, *Preaching the Tradition*, pp. 133-35, finds fifteen such addresses. Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, pp. 105-107, however, considers all of 1 Chr 29:1-19 to be redactional. I would agree that at least David's royal speech (1 Chr 29:1-5) and thus the people's response (vv 6-9) are later expansions, see Throntveit, *When Kings Speak*, pp. 92-93; however, these verses do play a significant structural role in the final form of the text as seen below.

²⁵ Saebø, "Taler og bønner," p. 125.

The initial form-critical classifications of Braun and Throntveit (edict, rationale, and oration) now appear to be much too rigid.²⁶ Nine of the addresses can be grouped under the more general classification: Encouragement for a Task, which would include “a call to a specific enterprise, a reason for undertaking it and/or grounds of encouragement which make the task a hopeful one.”²⁷ David’s last speeches in 1 Chronicles dominate here and set the pattern for future instances among his heirs. The task that is encouraged is the preparation of Solomon for the building of the temple. Braun has led the way in the contemporary understanding that argues ultimately for our seeing the reigns of David and Solomon as essentially one moment focused upon the temple, with David preparing for its construction and Solomon completing the task.²⁸ This means that these three chapters at the close of 1 Chronicles are in effect a transitional unit bridging the artificial gap between David and Solomon occasioned by the later division of the books of Chronicles.²⁹

1 Chronicles 22:6-10

6 Then he called for his son Solomon and charged him to build a house for the Lord, the God of Israel. 7 David said to Solomon, “My son, I had planned to build a house to the name of the Lord my God. 8 But the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ‘You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood in my sight on the earth. 9 See, a son shall be born to you; he shall be a man of peace. I will give him peace from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. 10 He shall build a house for my name. He shall be a son to me, and I will be a father to him, and I will establish his royal throne forever.’” (NRSV).

²⁶ Braun, *Significance*, pp. 225-49; Throntveit, *When Kings Speak*, pp. 20-50. The same may be said for the complex suggestions of De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*.

²⁷ Mason, *Preaching the Tradition*, p. 18. Mason was anticipated in this regard by O. Plöger, “Reden und Gebete,” p. 57, who speaks of David’s speeches as “*Ermunterungsreden*.”

²⁸ Braun, “Solomonic Apologetic;” *idem*, “Solomon, the Chosen Temple Builder;” *idem*, *1 Chronicles* (WBC 14; Waco, Tex: Word Books, 1986) xxxiii-xxxv, 219-27, 265-93.

²⁹ Braun, *1 Chronicles*, xxxv. The thorny problem of chapters 23-27 which many, including Braun, view as secondary, cannot engage us at this time, For conflicting, yet well argued views, see H. G. M. Williamson, “The Origins of the Twenty-Four Priestly Courses: A Study of 1 Chronicles xxiii-xxvii,” *Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 30; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979) 251-68; and J. W. Wright, “The Legacy of David in Chronicles: The Narrative Function of 1 Chronicles 23-27,” *JBL* 110 (1991) 229-42.

David's speech is laced with echoes of the dynastic oracle. Schniedewind conveniently lists three direct borrowings and four expansions to the previous material:³⁰

1. David's desire to build a temple (v 7) recalls 1 Chr 17:1-2
2. YHWH's prohibition (v 8) paraphrases 1 Chr 17:4
3. The promise of a son (v 10) follows the wording of 1 Chr 17:12-13
4. YHWH had justified his refusal to David by explaining he had no need of a temple (1 Chr 17:5-6). Verse 8 adds his military activity as further justification for the refusal
5. The designation of Solomon (v 9) corrects the oracle's lack of specificity regarding which of David's sons would follow him 1 Chr 17:9
6. The pun between Solomon's name (שלמה) and "peace" (שלום) (v 9) 1 Chr 17:9
7. The promise of peace/rest in 1 Chr 17:9 has been moved from David's reign (2 Sam 7:1, 11, where it was omitted by the Chronicler in the parallel 1 Chr 17) to that of Solomon (v 9)

Essentially, the passage seeks to provide an explanation for the historical fact that David did not construct the temple. This is accomplished by means of a judicious application of the Chronicler's theology of rest, as adapted from the principles set forth in Deut 12:10-11 (see above). By applying the concept of "rest" (not "peace" as in the NRSV) to Solomon in verse 9, the Chronicler has effectively drawn a contrast between David, whose time was spent in military pursuits that consolidated the kingdom, and Solomon, his "peaceful" son. Rather than disparaging David, however, this approach seeks to emphasize that God, as the primary actor in the narrative, has now determined the time is ripe for the construction of the temple, as indicated by his gift of "rest," the precursor of the project. Neither does the text seek to glorify Solomon. If David cannot build, Solomon cannot plan due to his "youth and inexperience" (v 8).³¹

As in the last section, this passage can be seen to have a concentric structure that emphasizes these very points (David's preparations, Solomon's youth, and the glorification of the temple):

³⁰ Schniedewind, *Word of God*, p. 156.

³¹ McConville, *I & II Chronicles*, p. 78.

³² מִצִּוּי followed by an infinitive signifies a command, especially in the Chronicler's syntax; BDB, 56.

- A David commands (אמר)³² the resident aliens (2a)
- B Stonecutters (2b)
- C David's preparations (3-4)
- D Solomon's youth as reason for David's preparations (5a)
- X Glory of the temple (5b)
- D' Solomon's charge (6-13)
- C' David's preparations (14)
- B' Stonecutters and other workers (15-16)
- A' David commands (צוה) all the leaders of Israel (17-19) *

1 Chronicles 28:2-5

2 Then David rose to his feet and said: "Hear me, my brothers and my people. I had planned to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, for the footstool of our God; and I made preparations for building. 3 But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for my name, for you are a warrior and have shed blood.' 4 Yet the Lord God of Israel chose me from all my ancestral house to be king over Israel forever; for he chose Judah as leader, and in the house of Judah my father's house, and among my father's sons he took delight in making me king over all Israel. 5 And of all my sons, for the Lord has given me many, he has chosen my son Solomon to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel" (NRSV).

Once again, Schniedewind has conveniently collected the Chronicler's echoes of 1 Chr 17 in this particular royal address and convincingly argues that the Chronicler has developed the themes of the dynastic oracle to a greater degree than its presentation in 1 Chr 22:6-10.³³ This development is accomplished by the repetition and expansion of three of the prior speeches' main points:

1. David's inability to build the temple (vv 2-3, see 22:7-8)
2. Solomon as David's chosen successor (vv 4-5, see 22:9)
3. Solomon as the divinely appointed temple builder (v 6, see 22:10)

The first expansion comes in David's reference to the temple as a "house of rest" (בית מנוחה, v 2). This is a new development in the Chronicler's theology of rest in these passages where, as we have seen, an initial omission of the concept in the Chronicler's version of the dynastic oracle (cf. 1 Chr 17:1 with 2 Sam 7:1-2) in order to remove the period of rest

³³ Schniedewind, *Word of God*, pp. 156-60.

from the time of David, was followed by the designation of Solomon as the "man of rest" (אִישׁ מְנוּחָה, 1 Chr 22:9) thereby attributing the time of rest to Solomon's rule. Now it becomes clear that the Chronicler's theology of rest is to reach its culmination in the building of the temple, the house of "rest." Further expansions on this theme include David's designation as a "man of war" (אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה)³⁴ who shed blood, thereby heightening the contrast between David and Solomon. This concept of rest was so important for the Chronicler's vision that David's military activity disqualified him from the temple's construction, despite the vital role that this military activity played in creating the necessary conditions for the project.³⁵

The second expansion has to do with the divine election of Solomon. Although Braun rightly regards verses 4-6a, 8, and 12b-18 as part of a later expansion,³⁶ the expansion is not contrary to the Chronicler's intent at this juncture, namely to emphasize the choice of Solomon to "sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD" (v 5), to be God's son (v 6), and to build the temple (v 10). This is the only instance of the divine choice of a post-Davidic king in the Old Testament.³⁷

In a similar fashion, the Chronicler develops the concept of "the kingdom of God." In the dynastic oracle God refers to the kingdom as "my kingdom" (1 Chr 17:14) with the implication that the kingdom is God's and the throne is Solomon's. The throne and the kingdom, however, are combined in David's first address with the announcement of God's decision "to establish the throne of his [i.e. Solomon's] kingdom over Israel forever" (1 Chr 22:10). Finally, in his present address, David again refers to the dynastic oracle, this time asserting that Solomon was chosen "to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel" (1 Chr 28:5). As Schniedewind perceptively concludes, "Again, the throne and the kingdom are placed together; however, now it is the 'throne of YHWH's kingdom.' The idea that the earthly kingdom of the Davidic ruler

³⁴ NRSV's translation ("warrior") at this point gives up too much of the symbolism inherent in the more literal translation. The argument that it eliminates an unnecessary occurrence of "man" overlooks the fact that Solomon's designation ("man of peace," 1 Chr 22:9, though we should read "man of rest") was not treated in this fashion.

³⁵ M. Selman, *1 Chronicles: An Introduction & Commentary* (TOTC 10a; Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity, 1994) 250.

³⁶ The later expansion interrupts the divine address in vv 3 and 6, is concerned with Solomon as king and not as temple builder, and contains the unprecedented notion of Judah's election; Braun, *Significance*, p. 41.

³⁷ Braun, "Chosen Temple Builder," p. 589.

belongs to God is implicit in the Chronicler's version of the dynastic oracle."³⁸

With the ponderous passage contained in 1 Chr 28:11-19 concerning the pattern of the temple,³⁹ the Chronicler emphasizes the transitional nature of the relationship between David and his son. David, in receiving the pattern from God and passing it on to Solomon has done all that he can to assure a smooth transference of power. Here, as well, it should be noticed that God, the designer of the pattern and the pattern of the temple itself are at least as prominent as David and his son.

Once again, the obvious concentric structuring of chapters 28-29 highlights the importance of the speeches for this transitional unit in the Chronicler's presentation:

- A Princes; gifts (28:1)
- B People addressed (28:2-8)
- C Solomon charged (28:9-10)
- X Pattern of temple delivered (28:11-19)
- C' Solomon charged (28:20-21)
- B' People addressed (29:1-5)
- A' Princes; gifts (29:6-8)

3. SOLOMON'S PRAYER: 2 CHRONICLES 6:40-42 = PSALM 132:8-10, 1 ≠ 1 KINGS 8:52-53

These thematic expansions introduced by the Chronicler reach their conclusion in the Solomonic material dealing with the construction and dedication of the temple. Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple (2 Chr 6:12-42) is the third of three Solomonic addresses (vv 12; 3-11) that have been taken over from 1 Kgs 8:12-50. The two versions of the prayers are very similar and remarkably free of alterations, apart from the minor orthographic and linguistic modifications that regularly appear in Chronicles, until the appeals with which each version of the prayer ends. In Kings the appeal reads:

52 "Let your eyes be open to the plea of your servant, and to the plea of your people Israel, listening to them whenever they call to you. 53 For you have

³⁸ Schniedewind, *Word of God*, pp. 157-58. Selman, *1 Chronicles*, p. 251, makes similar points in his treatment of the same material.

³⁹ Reading του ἱεροῦ "the temple" with the Greek tradition instead of the MT אולם "porch."

separated them from among all the peoples of the earth, to be your heritage, just as you promised through Moses, your servant, when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt, O Lord God.” (1 Kgs 8:52-53, NRSV)

Here Solomon uses God’s earlier deliverance of the people at the Exodus as the warrant for his request that God be attentive to his prayers and the prayers of Israel. This is in full accord with the themes of the dedication prayer in general and, as such, adds nothing new. The version in Chronicles, however, has been dramatically expanded:

40 “Now, O my God, let your eyes be open and your ears attentive to prayer from this place. 41 Now rise up, O Lord God, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. Let your priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let your faithful rejoice in your goodness. 42 O Lord God, do not reject your anointed one. Remember your steadfast love for your servant David.” (2 Chronicles 6:40-42, NRSV)

Here, in addition to the request that God be attentive “to prayer *from this place*” (v 40) a subtle change favoring the temple and all that it stands for over against the people, the warrant for such a request (vv 41-42) is entirely different. Based upon Ps 132:8-10, 1, this change shifts the focus away from Solomon, who has been literally the center of attention in terms of the concentric structuring of the first nine chapters of 2 Chronicles, and back to David. Both his faithfulness with regard to the ark (2 Sam 6) and God’s promise of an eternal dynasty (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17) are recalled in the fulfillment of those promises in the building of the temple. That this shift back to David is not intended to nullify Solomon is shown by the modification of “your anointed one” (Ps 132:10 [and 2 Chr 6:42 NRSV]) to “your anointed ones” (2 Chr 6:42). Although “your anointed ones” could refer to the priests mentioned immediately before, as Dillard has aptly remarked, “... it would appear better to refer to David and Solomon: the singular of Ps 132:10 which clearly referred to a king has been made plural in Chronicles to embrace both kings.”⁴⁰ This in turn augments the well known chronistic understanding of the reigns of David and Solomon as a united monarchy centered in the construction of the temple.

The omission of “today” (היום) in verse 19, where the *Vorlage* reads, “Regard your servant’s prayer and his plea, O Lord my God, heeding the cry and the prayer that your servant prays to you *today*” (1 Kgs 8:28), is best explained as an attempt to release the prayer from its chronological

⁴⁰ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, p. 51.

moorings. In this way the prayer functions as a “timeless paradigm” applicable to any period in history, especially the post-exilic period in which the Chronicler is writing, and not simply that of Solomon. God’s people in all times and in all places can be assured of having their prayers heard when they are offered at or toward this temple.⁴¹

4. CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to say whether the evidence gleaned from an examination of the Chronicler’s royal speeches argues for the idealization of Solomon or not. In every instance the emphasis fostered by the text can be attributed to the glorification of God, God’s election, or God’s kingdom with as great or greater a degree of probability than as an idealization of Solomon. In the conclusion of her discussion of Solomon, Sara Japhet speaks of two, apparently contradictory tendencies at work in the Chronicler’s vision of Solomon. The emphasis placed upon his role as temple builder has resulted in the omission of many other matters, but much of his work as temple builder is attributed to David. This reworking of the text provides a measure of balance in the relative contributions of both kings so that their two reigns in essence become one period where the son’s achievements draw upon and complement the work of his father. But this striving for parity can hardly be called idealization:

Even when it comes to his greatest achievement, Solomon is merely following his father’s instructions, using the manpower, tools, and materials provided by David. As individual characters, neither David nor Solomon is idealized in the book of Chronicles, but when the two figures are united by one central idea, their period becomes the golden era of Israelite history.⁴²

The “one central idea” that unites David and Solomon is the construction of the temple. And it is precisely in the temple that these themes coalesce:

1. Williamson is surely correct in his assessment that, “The Chronicler also stresses over against Sam./Ki. that it is especially in the building of the temple that the promises to David mediated through Nathan will have their initial fulfillment. This is the main purport of the

⁴¹ See Throntveit, *When Kings Speak*, pp. 58-61; Williamson, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1977) 64-66.

⁴² Japhet, *Ideology*, p. 489; for her discussion see pp. 478-89.

speeches of David in I Chr. 22:7-19, 28:2-10, 29:1-5 and his prayer in 29:10-19, all of which are peculiar to Chr."⁴³

2. Recent scholarly treatments of the Solomon narrative agree that the material in 2 Chr 1-9 has been structured in a concentric, chiasmic, or otherwise palistropic literary architecture and, while there is some disagreement as to the precise arrangement of the individual elements, there is unanimity on the fact that the narrative centers on the construction and dedication of the temple.⁴⁴
3. Significant chronistic alteration of the deuteronomistic Vorlage in the Solomon story is not only concerned with removing those remembrances deemed to blemish his character. Several accounts that would have enhanced a glorification of the king have been removed because they do not serve the Chronicler's ultimate purpose in this material which is to glorify the temple. Even as staunch a supporter of the idealization of Solomon as Dillard can conclude, "... narratives not showing any involvement with the cult are omitted. Even the endowment with wisdom is not wisdom in the abstract (1 Kgs 3:16-4:34) but is specifically wisdom to build the temple."⁴⁵

Thus, it seems the Chronicler's view of Solomon and his age, at least as far as that is recoverable from an examination of his royal speeches and prayers, is hazy at best. The accounts available to the Chronicler in Kings have been utilized to produce a picture of Solomon that portrays him as the builder of God's temple, at a time determined by God, in a place determined by God, to fulfill God's promise, and according to a pattern delivered by God through David. This emphasis on God and God's temple forms the true thrust of the Chronicler's message to post-exilic Israel. As Selman reminds us, "This divine right of kings, as it is

⁴³ Williamson, *Israel*, p. 65.

⁴⁴ See Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, pp. 5-7; De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, p. 233; Duke, *Persuasive Appeal*, p. 65; Selman, *2 Chronicles*, pp. 285-86; Kelly, *Retribution*, pp. 87-88. Dillard's arrangement is by far the most intricate and widely quoted. Duke's modifications with regard to the crucial central material are convincing and have the advantage of maintaining the intricacy of Dillard's arrangement as over against the very basic structure envisioned by De Vries. Selman, who is critical of Dillard's failure to account adequately for 2 Chr 3-5, has proposed a radically simplified arrangement that is preferred and adopted by Kelly. On the matter of chiasmus in Chronicles see I. Kalimi, *Zur Geschichtsschreibung des Chronisten* (BZAW 236; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter) 191-234. For a similar concentric arrangement of the Solomon story in Kings see J. T. Walsh, *1 Kings* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1996) 151.

⁴⁵ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, p. 2.

developed here, is far from giving unqualified approval to the king's every move. Rather it confirms that despite Solomon's weaknesses, God was still working out his own purposes through him."⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Selman, *1 Chronicles*, p. 251.