

## SECTIONS AND READINGS FOR TRAIL IV

Section IV.1	1 Samuel 13:1-14:52
Section IV.2	1 Samuel 15:1-16:23
Section IV.3	1 Samuel 17:1-18:30
Section IV.4	1 Samuel 19:1-20:42
Section IV.5	1 Samuel 21:1-22:23
Section IV.6	Psalms 59 & 52
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Section IV.16	2 Samuel 5:1-25; 23:8-39; 1 Chronicles 11:1-12:40; 14:1-17 & Psalm 30
Section IV.17	2 Samuel 6:1-23 & 1 Chronicles 13:1-14; 15:1-16:43
Section IV.18	2 Samuel 7:1-29 & 1 Chronicles 17:1-27
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Section IV.20	2 Samuel 9:1-10:19 & 1 Chronicles 19:1-19
Section IV.21	1 Chronicles 20:1-3 & 2 Samuel 11:1-12:31
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Section IV.27	2 Samuel 21:1-22:51; 1 Chronicles 20:4-8 & Psalm 18
Section IV.28	2 Samuel 24:1-25 & 1 Chronicles 21:1-22:1; 27:1-24
Section IV.29	1 Chronicles 22:2-19 & 1 Kings 1:1-53
Section IV.30	1 Chronicles 23:1-26:32; 27:25-34
Section IV.31	1 Chronicles 28:1-29:25
Section IV.32	1 Kings 2:1-12; 2 Samuel 23:1-7; 1 Chronicles 29:26-30 & 1 Kings 2:13-46
Section IV.33	1 Kings 3:1-4:28 & 2 Chronicles 1:1-13
Section IV.34	1 Kings 4:29-34 & Psalms 127; 72
Section IV.35	1 Kings 5:1-6:38 & 2 Chronicles 2:1-3:14
Section IV.36	1 Kings 7:1-51 & 2 Chronicles 3:15-5:1
Section IV.37	1 Kings 8:1-21 & 2 Chronicles 5:2-6:11
Section IV.38	1 Kings 8:22-66 & 2 Chronicles 6:12-7:10
Section IV.39	1 Kings 9:1-28 & 2 Chronicles 7:11-8:18
Section IV.40	1 Kings 10:1-29 & 2 Chronicles 9:1-29; 1:14-17
Section IV.41	1 Kings 11:1-43 & 2 Chronicles 9:29-31
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THE UNITED KINGDOM ERA

1 & 2 SAMUEL; 1 KINGS 1-11; 1 CHRONICLES; 2 CHRONICLES 1-9;  
& A FEW PSALMS

COMPREHENSIVE QUESTION:

From this era, what can a Christian learn about being a leader among God's people today?

## INTRODUCTION TO 1 & 2 SAMUEL.

The two books of Samuel together formed a single book of Samuel in the Former Prophets section of the Hebrew Scriptures and were the first two of four Books of the Kingdoms, comprising 1 Samuel through 2 Kings, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Septuagint [LXX] Greek translation. The books of Samuel deal with the development of the nation of Israel from the disintegrated tribal confederacy under the judges to the established monarchy under David, plus an account of David's reign. The story seems to have been told from the perspective of the prophets of Yahweh.

The main religious theme is that Israel is the people of Yahweh, their only true Ruler. First, they are rebuked for their decadence and sin by the last judge, Samuel, who under Yahweh's guidance reluctantly accedes to the peoples' demand for a king like that of the surrounding nations. Then, Saul, the sort of king the people wanted, is anointed at Yahweh's command, but his self-willed leadership proves to be a danger to the nation. Finally, David is appointed and leads the people with the aim of pursuing God's will. Yet at the height of his power David too falls into serious sin, and he, his family and the nation suffer the consequences.

## ANALYSIS OF 1 SAMUEL.

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|----------|---|
| 1-6      | Eli's high priesthood and its failure.                          |
| 1        | Samuel's birth.   |
| 2:1-10   | Hannah's song.  |
| 2:11-36  | Corruption of Eli's sons.                                       |
| 3        | Samuel's call.  |
| 4-6      | The ark narrative.  |
| 7-12     | Samuel's judgeship.   |
| 7        | Samuel's judging and the defeat of the Philistines.             |
| 8        | Samuel's warning about the disadvantages of monarchy.           |
| 9-11     | The process of choosing Saul to be king.                        |
| 12       | Samuel's farewell discourse.                                    |
| 13-31    | Saul's tragic reign.  |
| 13-14    | Saul's war against the Philistines.                             |
| 15       | Yahweh's rejection of Saul as king                              |
| 16:1-13  | Samuel's anointing of David to be king.                         |
| 16:14-23 | David's introduction to Saul.                                   |
| 17       | David's defeat of Goliath.                                      |
| 18-20    | David's relationships with Saul and with Saul's family.         |
| 21-27    | David on the run as an outlaw pursued by Saul.                  |
| 28       | Saul consults the witch of Endor.                               |
| 29-30    | David discharged by the Philistines and campaigns in the south. |
| 31       | Defeat, death and burial of Saul.                               |

## ANALYSIS OF 2 SAMUEL.

1-5	David consolidates his rule in Hebron and takes Jerusalem from the Jebusites.
1	David's lament over Saul and Jonathan.
2:1-11	David's anointing as king of Judah in Hebron.
2:12-4:12	Wars with Ishbaal and Abner who lead Israel
5:1-5	David anointed king of Israel.
5:6-25	Jerusalem captured and Philistines defeated.
6-10	David's early reign in Jerusalem
6	The ark moved to Jerusalem.
7	Nathan's oracle and David's prayer in response.
8	David's wars and officials.
9	David's loyalty to Saul's last son, Mephibosheth.
10	Wars with Arameans.
11-20	David's great sin and his subsequent family problems.
11-12	David's affair with Bathsheba and its immediate tragic consequences.
13:1-37	Ammon's rape of Tamar and his execution by Absalom.
13:38-20:3	Absalom's revolt.
20:4-26	Sheba's revolt.
21-24	Six miscellaneous appendices on David's life and reign.
21:1-14	The Gibeonite's revenge.
21:15-22.	Exploits of David's men.
22	A Psalm of David
23:1-7	David's last words.
23:8-39	David's warriors.
24	David's census and the ensuing plague.

Thus, the first two major sections of 1 Samuel deal with the conclusion of the era of the judges, while the balance of the two books deal with the beginning of the era of the united monarchy, which continues to be covered for Solomon's reign in 1 Kings.

1. Why are there so many different translations of 13:1? Does your translation have a footnote about the poor state of the traditional Hebrew text here? How important might the scholarly discipline of textual criticism to establish the likeliest original text, be for biblical studies? What does Paul's statement in Ac 13:21 indicate about how some 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. rabbinic Jews read their Hebrew of text 1 S 13:1 about the length of Saul's reign? Unfortunately, the Dead Sea Scrolls do not include this section of 1 Samuel.
2. In view of their technical (13:9-22) and numerical (13:5, 11, 15) odds, what plight was Israel and Saul in, especially after Jonathan stirred up the Philistine hornets' nest at Geba? Have you ever faced similar odds? How so? Can you understand Saul's failure to wait for Samuel to arrive before offering appropriate sacrifices to Yahweh? Why was Saul judged so harshly by Samuel, when he himself was so late? Why did Yahweh seem to judge Saul and Israel less harshly than Samuel did (14:23)?
3. What contributed to Jonathan's great courage (2:9f; 14:6; 2 Ch 14:11)? What indicates that he was not being presumptuous (14:9-12)? How have you seen God influence many people through a few people's confidence in his guidance and power? (17:47)? How so?
4. From the evidence of these chapters, how do Saul's and Jonathan's political and military skills compare? How does the situation around Saul's oath (14:24), illuminate Saul's relationships both to his army and to his son and heir? How skilled was Saul as a father? What might account for Saul's harshness to Jonathan in spite of his bravery and his ignorance of the oath? Could this be a foretaste of Saul's later attitude to David (18:7-9)? Do you find similar attitudes between even your closest relatives? What similarities and differences do you find to Jephthah's infamous oath and its consequences (Ju 11:30-40)? Was it right that the army's perspective prevailed here? Why?
5. Would it be fair to say that the two clauses: "Yahweh will work with us" (14:6) and "he [Jonathan] worked with Yahweh" (14:45), together suggest that there was a working partnership between Yahweh and particular human beings? How does this illustrate the more general Divine-human sovereignty partnership envisioned in Ps 8:4-8 and the Christian ministry / service partnerships within the Body of Christ according to Paul (1 Co 3:9; 1 Th 3:2; Cl 1:29; 1 Co 12:6)?
6. What do you make of the accuracy of the historical statement in 14:18 that "the Ark of God was at that time with the sons of Israel", in spite of the other historical statements (a) that for twenty years (7:2) it was lodged at Kirath-jearam in Jebusite territory [about 14km NW of Jerusalem] and (b) that it remained there in the house of Abinadab until much later when David had it carefully removed to his new court on Mt. Zion (2 S 7:1) [which he had recently captured from the Jebusites (2 S 5:6-8; 1 Ch 11:4f)]? Does it help you appreciate on practical value of textual criticism, if you note that it discloses that at 14:18 the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C. Greek LXX translations read in its Hebrew original text the "ephod" rather than the "Ark" as in the much later traditional Masoretic Hebrew text which we generally follow? However, was it wise for Saul to expect that the ephod of the High Priest which was travelling with the Israelite army, would be a talisman or magical charm that would guarantee their military success any better than the presence of the Ark of the Covenant with which Eli's two sons had aided Israel against the Philistines earlier (ch. 4)?

1. If the Kenites were indeed a clan of smiths [as their Hebrew name suggests], what timely economic side benefits might Saul have been seeking by separating out and sparing those of them who were currently living among the invading nomadic Amalekites (13:19-22)? What similar motives may well lie behind Saul's sparing the best of the Amalekites' livestock? How much do similar "bottom lines" influence your decisions as a Christians and as a Christian congregation? What great danger is there in this (Mt 6:24; Lk 16:13; Cl 3:5; 1 Ti 6:9-11)?
2. How does Saul's disobedience and Samuel's intervention on behalf of Yahweh develop here? How aware of his disobedience does Saul seem to be at first (15:13)? To what extent can you identify with Saul in his squirming to find a way to save face before the people and Samuel? Can you also identify with Samuel's agony? How so?
3. What does disobedience to Yahweh involve (15:22f)? How does it compare to divination and idolatry? Has God's view of the importance of obedience changed since then (Ho 6:6; Mi 6:6-8; Mt 9:13; 12:7)? How important is obeying to you? Why?
4. Does Yahweh's prophet's assent to the king's pleading, imply that Yahweh himself has really changed his mind too (15:11, 25-31, 35; 16:1)? How might this apply to the complying assent of Christian leaders to the desires of their people? How does this compare to Saul's earlier yielding to the people's pleas on behalf of Jonathan (14:45) or even to Samuel's reluctant compliance with the people's requests for a king like all the other nations (8:5, 19-22)?
5. How does God direct Samuel? How would this encourage you to obey him? How hard would it be for a prophet of God, especially one who was renown as a divinely aided seer, to have to learn the lesson of 16:7 (1 K 8:39; 1 Ch 28:9)? Yet how might David's visible characteristics, reassure Samuel and others of the wisdom of Yahweh's choice? How did God use them to accomplish his purposes (16:18)? What other new characteristics of David was ultimately more important even for external observers (16:13, 18)? By what criteria do you evaluate the worth of other people, even fellow Christians?
6. Given that the Hebrew word "Ra" [Usually translated as "evil"] has a very wide range of meanings and connotations in the Bible [e.g, bad, worst, disagreeable, unpleasant, displeasing, unhappy, poor in value, poor in kind, hurtful, ethically evil, etc.] should we understand Saul's periodic affliction as a matter of spirit possession, depression or what? In any case, what were God's involvements in both Saul's "bad" ailment and David's helpful therapy (16:14f)? Was David's musical ministry to Saul a practical expression of Yahweh's care at work or was it simply an ancient form of secular music therapy, or both (16:13f, 18, 23; 18:10)?

1. How would you describe the interchange between David and his eldest brother, Eliab (17:28-30)? Have you had similar conversations with your siblings or other family members? What does this illustrate about David (16:18f)? How did this accomplish God's purposes (17:21)? Could this happen with you too? How so?
2. What gives authentic historical realism to the heroic event recorded in ch. 17, in contrast to mere legendary tales? Would it help to learn that the height of the giant Goliath in 17:4 tended to grow over the centuries of transmission by scribes, for a mere 4 cubits, according to the Dead Sea Scrolls] and a span, up to a span plus 5 cubits [7 ½ feet, according to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C LXX] and ultimately 6 cubits [9 feet, according to the much later Masoretic Hebrew text]?
3. Why do you think the young David had more courage to face Goliath than did the much more seasoned warriors of Israel, including valiant Saul himself, who was head and shoulders taller than most Israelites (10:23)? What giants do you think are challenging and intimidating God's people today? How can Christians be equipped to withstand such giants (Ep 6:10-21)?
4. Why might it be that neither Saul nor his general, Abner, seem to know who the young giant killer was, in spite of David having for some time been Saul's occasional music therapist and armour bearer and even an acclaimed warrior (16:18,21; 17:15)? Is it simply a matter of tight role-stereotyping? Have you ever witnessed that personally? What else might be involved?
5. What was gradually eating away at Saul's relationship to his devoted servant David? What various circumstances and actions made matters worse and worse for Saul? Can you identify with David and/or Saul at any point here? What did Saul's state of mind motivate him to say and do? Have similar mental states motivated you to speak of act inappropriately? What can be done to slow and halt such a downward spiral?
6. Can we sometimes unwittingly speak prophetically, like Saul in 18:8 and Samuel earlier in 13:14 7 15:28 (Jn 18:14)? Has this ever happened to you? Do you know why?

1. According to the biblical record, what seems to have been involved in the love relationship between David and Jonathan (18:1-4; 19:1-7; 20:1-9, 13-17, 23, 28-30, 41f)? Is there any hint that their wonderful relationship was homosexual in the modern physical sense of the term (23:16-18; 2 S 1:26)? Why? How does Saul understand it (22:8)?
2. What risks and costs were inherent in Jonathan's (18:1, 3, 19) and Michal's (18:20) love for David? What costs may be required of you for your friends (Jn 15:13f; 1 Jn 3:16, 18)? How well does David's and Jonathan's love measure up to the criteria for true love in 1 Co 13:4-7 and Ro 12:8-21? What about your friendships? How does your family feel about some of the friends that you love? Do the examples of David, Jonathan and Michal help you face your family vs friends tensions, and perhaps even show how God can be at work in them? But if your love relationship with God is itself a source of family tensions (Mt 10:34-37), what can you do?
3. Are your solemn promises worth more than Saul's were (19:6, 10f)? On what does keeping your promises depend? Are you willing to keep promises even at risk of personal loss and great danger, as was Jonathan (20:30f)?, and even God himself (Jn 3:16; Ro 5:8; Ep 2:4; 1 Jn 4:10)? Why?
4. How and why did even the best Israelites in this era seem to have few scruples about lying and deception to save lives (19:14, 17; 20:6, 28f; 21:2, 8, 13)? How might this boomerang on them (20:30-34) and on innocent parties (22:18f)? Does even Yahweh himself seem to encourage Samuel to lie (16:2)? How do you draw the line between legitimate camouflage and deliberate lying? What seems to be David's own, hard-learned, later advice (Ps 34:11-14)?
5. Looking at Israelite religious practices in this era, do 19:13 & 16 indicate that even worshipers of Yahweh still practiced some form of idolatry? Does the family celebration at each new moon (20:5f, 18, 24, 29) have religious significance (Nu 10:10; 28:11-15; Ps 81:3)? What forms of prophecy can you discern, on the basis of Samuel's public and private ministry and the brief glimpses into the practices of other prophets associated with him (10:10-12; 19:20-24)?

1. How does Jesus' use of 21:3-6 in Mk 2:23-28 (Mk 2:23-28) illuminate the story here? How does his reference to this story help Jesus make one of his main points with the Pharisees of his day (Mk 2:27)?
2. What light does 21:46 throw upon one important aspect of consecration in the Old Testament (Ex 19:14f)? Does this imply that all priests! clergy, even Christian ones, should practice abstinence when performing their priestly duties? When and why might that be appropriate?
3. Does anything in 21:10-15 and 22:3-5 suggest that David's flights beyond Israelite territory to escape Saul's pursuit, were taken without Yahweh's guidance and/ or approval (22: 9f, 13, 15)? What seems to have determined David's actions in each case (Pr 29:25)? Have you ever done anything similar? Did God redirect you? How?
4. How were David's men much like those of the English outlaw Robin Hood (25:14-16)? Why did they flock to him (22:2)? How does Yahweh transform even such a motley asocial crew under godly leadership? To what extent is this also true of the church of Jesus Christ (1 Co 1:26-31; 6:9-11; Ep 4:11-16)?
5. How might proverbs like Pr 6:34; 14:30 and 27:4, help you understand Saul's feelings, imaginings, words and deeds here in ch. 22? Have you ever been blinded to the truth about others? What have you done about it when you discovered your error? Why did Saul resort to using Doeg the Edomite as his sword (21:7)? When have you employed others, preferably unbelievers, to do your dirty work? Who, nevertheless, is really guilty in God's eyes (2 S 12:9)?

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PSALMS.

The Book of Psalms is the hymnbook of the Jewish "church", containing psalms for both public and private worship. Some seem to have been written for public worship [e.g., those with superscriptions "to the choirmaster"]. Others were probably originally personal meditations that were later taken over for use in the sanctuary and/or family worship. There are also teaching poems and historical recitals. The total collection stood at the beginning of the third and final section of the Hebrew Scriptures, "The Writings", but sometimes that whole section was called "The Psalms".

All of the Psalms are in beautiful Hebrew poetry, which like much other Ancient Near Eastern poetry, does not depend on rhyming but upon parallelism of thought between two or more parts of a line and/or between groupings of two or more lines. The commonest general forms of parallelism are synonymous, antithetical and synthetic. In synonymous parallelism essentially the same thought is repeated in a different way (e.g., Ps 1:4). In antithetical parallelism a second thought is set in contrast with the first one, often with a "but" connective (e.g., Ps 1:6). In synthetic parallelism the original thought is developed further in the remainder (e.g., Ps 1:2). Within this basic parallelism, Hebrew poetry also liberally employs most of the literary devices common to most poetry -- e.g., repetition, inverted arrangement, climax, exaggeration, personification and plays on words and sounds -- and occasionally even rhyming.

Some Psalms have titles/ superscriptions; some have none. They are not part of the original Hebrew text, but only appear perhaps as late as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. They are printed in only some translations, often in smaller print or italics. Many of them traditionally associate the Psalm with some person or group, and sometimes even with some particular occasion. That person or group may or may not be referred to as its author, because phrases like "A Psalm of David" are quite ambiguous in Hebrew. Some psalm titles have what appear to be musical notations, which are difficult to interpret today. Some of these may even be subscriptions rather than superscriptions, and thus apply to the preceding psalm.

The psalms seem to have been originally composed throughout Israel's history from the Exodus through the Exile and perhaps beyond, and reworked later to fit new circumstances. The first psalm and the last one or few psalms may even have been especially composed as introduction and conclusion for the entire collection. The final Hebrew edition of the Psalter was divided into five books, each of which ends with a doxology and usually an "Amen" or two: Books One (1-41), Two (42-72); Three (73-89); Four (90-106); Five (107-150). This may possibly indicate that five separate preexisting hymn books were now combined without alteration into one comprehensive psalter, even if that meant including two very similar versions of essentially the same psalm (e.g., Ps 14 & 53), as do even some modern hymnals to serve a wider public. The exact order and contents of the psalms of books 4 and 5 are not all fully established in the manuscripts of the Dead Sea Scrolls. For example, those scrolls include a Hebrew original of the 151<sup>st</sup> psalm, which was acknowledged to be "outside the number" in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century LXX [Septuagint] Greek translation. Also included are the Hebrew original of two psalms found otherwise only in the Syriac Psalter of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Psalm 59:

1. How well does this psalm fit into the context of Saul's attempt to arrest David at home (1 S 19:11-18) as the psalm's superscription suggests?
2. How does David describe (a) God, (b) his enemies and (c) his relationship to his enemies? What have his enemies done that David finds most damaging? Why might he want international vindication, when he is only personally threatened? At what points can you identify with David? How would you adjust the psalm to use it as your own prayer?
3. Which of David's names for God do you use in your prayers? Why? Which of the characteristics of Yahweh that David celebrates, are most important to you? Why?

Psalm 52:

4. How well does the superscription of this psalm fit the occasion referred to in 1 S 21:1-9 and 22:9-23? In what ways does the Edomite fit David's description of an evil person? How do the godly and the ungodly compare with respect to (a) their character, (b) what they trust and (c) their ultimate end?
5. Is this psalm really a prayer? Have you ever dared to talk to God in such a way about your feelings about other people? How so? How much can you identify with David's description of himself as a righteous person? How so?
6. What does the psalmist suggest are the appropriate responses to God's kindness/ loving kindness/ covenant love/ constant love/ faithful love [Hebrew = "chesed"]?. What can you praise God for right now? Have you ever considered writing poems about your experience with God? Would you consider praying such a poem? Why?
7. What name of God do you think David is referring to in 52:9? Why doesn't he just use it? Why do Christians so often refer to that same name without using it? What about your usage in prayer and otherwise?

[According to their superscriptions. these two poems seem to relate to David's harrowing experience at Gath (1 S 21:10-15). Perhaps they were roughed out while David was hiding in the cave after his narrow escape (22:10f)]

Psalm 56:

1. In Ps 56:1-6, how does David describe the situation he feels that he is in? Is he being paranoid? Why? What similar situations have you felt that you've been in? How does David express the tension between fear of men (56:1f, 5f) and trust in God (56:3f, 10f)? Have you also felt this tension? Who helps David resolve this tension? How might David's reflections here help you?
2. What images express David's experience of God's intimate concern for him? What characteristics of God does he depend upon? How meaningful are these descriptions and divine characteristics to you personally? How does David's express his response to God's care? What might be an appropriate response to such care for you today?
3. What is God's ultimate purpose for delivering his own people (56:13)? How would you express that in your own words? What could that purpose mean for you personally? If embraced, how might it influence your daily living?

Psalm 34:

4. Consider the ways Ps 34 might express David's state of mind after the events narrated in 1 S 21f. Why had David wanted to meet with Ahimelech (1 S 22:10)? Why do you think David found it necessary to mislead the priest (1 S 21:2)? Did this deception help Ahimelech when Saul summoned him? Why? What were David's responses to Abiathar's report (1 S 22:20-23)? How well does 34:18-22 capture David's feelings and faith in Yahweh then? Do you agree with the psalm's concluding verse? How so? What might this mean for you personally?
5. Do you think David was very wise to seek refuge in Gath, Goliath's home city, with the Philistine giant's own sword in hand? When he was recognized, how did he find the wisdom to act mad before the king to escape certain death? According to Ps 34:4-6, what did David learn from this humiliatingly close call?
6. How does what David says about his fearing Yahweh in 34:7-11, compare to the fear he expressed in Ps 56 about his encounter with the king of Gath? What were the results for David? How might this apply to you?
7. According to 34:11-16, what does David now see as the negative consequences of his recent lying and deception? What advice does he, therefore, offer? What positive results does he expect will follow from heeding his advice? How does! P 3:8-12 develop this theme for 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians? How relevant is it still today?
8. Does 34:8 sum up the psalm's theme for you? Do you often bless God for the same reasons that David did? How might you get other people to join you in his blessing (34:3)? According to this psalm, what is the ultimate hope of God's people? How does the New Testament develop the theme of hope for God's people (e.g., Ro 5:1-5; 8:18-39; 15:13; 1 Ti 6:13-17; Tt 3:11-13; 1 Jn 3:1-3; 1 P 1:3, 21; 3:15; 2P 3:10-15, 17f; Rv 1:6; 20:6; 21:1-7)? What is your Christian hope? How does it influence your present living with and for God?

[As the superscriptions suggest, these two Psalms may well have been written when David took refuge in the cave of Adullam with his family and men (1 S 22).]

Psalm 142:

1. What is David's situation as he sees it? What images are used to express his feelings about it? When have you ever felt like him? Do you feel free to talk to God as honestly as he did about your feelings and the situations you are facing? Why?
2. How might the physical and psychological reality of living in a cave and being constantly on the move running from Saul teach David about his true refuge and portion in life? Have you also learned this? How so?
3. What further hope does his special relationship to Yahweh bring David and his associates? What further hope does your relationship to Yahweh bring you? How does God answer David's prayer only in part (1 S 22:1f)? Yet, what does this free him to do (1 S 22:3-5)? What further hope does David still have (Ps 142:7)? What hope does your relationship with Yahweh bring to you? How important is that for continued living in your present situation (1 Co 10:13)?

Psalm 57:

4. What is this psalm's main theme? How soon is it presented? How is it developed throughout? How much can you identify with any of the descriptions of David and his enemies? What other themes inform his praise of God? Are they sufficient grounds for his initial appeal to and trust in God?
5. Why are truth/ reliability/ faithfulness [Hebrew = "emeth"] and loving kindness [Hebrew = "hesed", as in Ps 52:1-2 etc.] so closely connected here in 57:3 and 10, and so very frequently elsewhere throughout the entire Bible whenever speaking of Yahweh (Ex 34:6) and his people's proper behaviour (1 Co 13:6; 2 Jn 3)? Which characteristics of God matter most to you now? What might his other characteristics mean to you sometimes? What about these to so biblically-prominent characteristics?
6. Can you detect any growth in David's understanding of God from Ps 56 to Ps 57? How much have difficult experiences in your life contributed to your own spiritual growth? Do you learn more from difficulties or from facilities? Why might that be so (Ro 5:3-10, Ja 1:2f, 12; 1 P 1:6ff)? Does this lead you to thank, praise and glorify God as your Lord/ Sovereign (57:7-11) in all circumstances? How would you express such responses to God's character (57:1)? Might reading and praying psalms like this help you do so?

1. Have you ever wished for as clear guidance and encouragement as David had here? When? Why? In what sorts of circumstances does God provide such guidance? Can you identify at all with David's plight here? Do you pray for God's guidance before making important decisions? How so?
2. How important is the ministry of encouragement that Jonathan exercised for his friend David (23:16f)? How have you experienced this vital ministry? Did you appreciate it? Is this a ministry you yourself would like to exercise too? Why? If 2 Co 1:3f indicates how one becomes qualified for this ministry ["to console", "to comfort", "to encourage", "to exhort" all translate the same Greek verb depending on the circumstances = "to speak to someone from alongside them"], would you still want such a self-involving ministry? Why?
3. If you were David, would you have considered the Israelite's call to Saul to route the Philistines as an appropriate and very timely answer to your prayer in Ps 54? Would this answer have surprised you? Why? How have you noticed God's remarkable sense of timing working out in your life?
4. What is ironic about Saul's blessing of the Ziphites (23:21) and David (24:19) and his demand for David's oath (24:21f)? How often do you hear people who are not particularly following God invoking his name in one way or another, especially in oaths (Ps 54:3)? What ways surprise you the most? Could they be taking God's name in vain (Ex 20:7; Dt 5:11)? Or is there a semi-conscious or residual awareness of God (Ja 2:19)?
5. What reasons does David give for sparing the king (a) to his followers and (b) to Saul himself? Might he have had Dt 32:35 & 41 mind just as much as the double-edged ancient proverb he quotes (24:13)? How should you respond when wronged (Ro 12:17-21; 1 P 2:23; 4:19; Mt 18:22)? Do you think David was also bearing well in mind that he too was Yahweh's anointed one (16:13; Mt 7:12; Lk 6:31)? What impact did David's restraint and rationale have upon Saul? Would you trust Saul's repentance? Why? Do you think David did (24:22)? Whom do you know whose sworn word is similar (a) to Saul's or (b) to David's (24:22)? How do you respond to each?

1. How do the characters of the husband and wife, Nabal and Abigail, compare? Can you think of a situation in which you might act as she did? What would it be like to live with a spouse like Nabal? Would you have to be a spouse like Abigail? How about living with a partner like Abigail? What might prompt you to become more like Nabal? How so?
2. Why does David break his oath of 25:22 and even thank God for helping him to do so? Have you ever found yourself caught in such a position? What did you do? Does God understand? How do you know? What difference did your about-face make for you and the others involved?
3. What do you make of David's accumulation of wives and also of Saul's giving David's first wife, Michal, Saul's own daughter, to someone else? What does this seem to say about the place of women in their society? How did this affect even a strong woman's self-worth (25:41)? How has the status of women changed in principle in Christianity (Ga 3:27-29; Ep 5:25-33; 1 P 3:7)? Why? Has it changed enough yet in the day to day relationships of the Christian couples whom you know best?
4. How was David's thinking about why he could not kill his enemy, king Saul, further influenced by what Yahweh and Abigail had taught hint about vengeance? What have you learned about this basic principle?
5. Why did David not trust in Saul's new show of repentance (24:16-20; 26:21-25; 27:1f)? Would you have? Why? Does that mean that David didn't really forgive Saul (Mt 6:12, 14; 18:27f)? In whose valuation did David really trust for (a) recompense and (b) his life? Why (26:23; Dt 32:35, 41)? Where do you get the valuation of your life (1 P 1:7)? How can that enable you too to go on your way and live free of the fear of very real human threats? Nevertheless, what precaution does David take very soon (27:1f)?

1. Why do you think David reasoned and acted as he did in spite of twice discovering that Yahweh wanted him to return to Israelite territory (21:10-15; 22:3-5) and that Saul had twice acknowledged that David would prevail and be king (24:20; 26:25)? Would you have trusted Saul or even Jonathan (23:16-18)? Why? Could you have trusted Yahweh in spite of human opposition? Why?
2. How did David maneuver Achish, king of Gath, into a closer working relationship (27:8-12)? Have you ever consciously or unconsciously obscured the truth just a bit — by either not telling the whole truth or not telling nothing but the truth — to further your own ends? When? Why? Without God's help, is it even possible not to do so? Even with God's help is it always possible? How advantageous a position did his new relationship with Achish give David (29: 1f)?
3. Have you, like Saul, ever been desperate enough to compromise your religious and ethical convictions (Lv 19:31; 1 S 28:3, 6-9, 15)? Did you benefit from your compromise any more than Saul did (28:16-19; 1 Ch 10:13f)? How so? To what ultimate effect? How might Saul have tried to rationalize his behaviour? How did you do so? What do you think about that now?
4. What effect did Saul's Yahwehist oath (28:10, 21) have on the medium of En-dor? Why did such an oath seem necessary? Do you make oaths? Why? Should Christians make oaths at all (Mt 5:33-37; Ja 5:12)? Why?
5. What was the medium's predicament both after she saw Samuel and after she heard what he said to Saul? Could she have done anything differently than she did? How did she minister to Saul despite her legitimate fears (? Would have been able to do so? Why?
6. Are there any grounds for taking this story as a biblical substantiation of mediums' general claims to be able to communicate with the dead? Why? In any case, would such an endorsement justify Christian's consulting mediums for such a purpose? Why (Lv 19:31; 20:6, 27; Dt 18:10-12; 1 S 28:3, 9, 21)?

1. Was the position David found himself now in (a) a strategic military advantage for Israel (29:1-5), (b) a military bonus for the Philistines (27:12; 28:1; 29:2, 6, 9) or (c) just in a conflict of interest situation for David (29:8; 1 Ch 12:19)? How did Yahweh manage to deliver David both from the present situation and its possible immediate and long-term consequences? Has God ever delivered you from such a bind? When? How? Did David resist Yahweh's way out? How would you have responded?
2. Has your good reputation, like David's (18:6f; 21:10; 29:5), ever back-fired? What is your reputation amongst unbelievers (1 Ti 3:7)? What are its advantages and disadvantages for living for God in the secular world? How true is your reputation? How could it be corrected? Would you want it to be corrected? Why?
3. What consequences did David suffer for his temporary alliance with the Philistines against Israel (30:1-6)? Where did David find strength to face the personal and political tragedy? How did David's early return to Ziklag eventually prove to be providential for David and his followers? How much of divine providence in your own life seems to you to be a matter of timing beyond your control? How, then, does it involve for your faith/ trust, hope, patience and thanksgiving?
4. What do you make of the general compensation principle of David (30:24f)? Could the principle have been suggested by the consequences of his not having provided for the security of his home base, Ziklag, while he was occupied in Gath? What does Yahweh's involvement have to do with it (30:23)? Is the principle valid without Yahweh's explicit involvement? Where is it valid policy for the Christian community (Ro 12:4f; 1 Co 12:7)?
5. How wise was David's strategy in 30:26-31, considering his earlier false claim of harassing some of the same Judaic communities (27:7-12)? Have you ever found it prudent to do something similar? Why? Did these new actions unwittingly help facilitate the next stage of David's royal career (2 S 2:1-4)? Have you ever found similar unintended positive consequences of your prudent actions? When? Can you see God's hand in this? Why?

## INTRODUCTION TO 1 & 2 CHRONICLES.

The two books of Chronicles, originally one whole, were composed much later than the books of Samuel and Kings, which are frequently quoted in Chronicles along with other lost historical sources. The literary style is similar to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which also come from the early post-exilic period, perhaps even from the same author(s). The books of Chronicles are placed last in the Writings, the last section of the Hebrew Bible, and are, thus, widely separated from the earlier historical books, like Samuel and Kings, in the second section of the Hebrew Bible, the Former Prophets. But in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Greek LXX [Septuagint] translation, Chronicles is divided into two and placed in the historical section right after the four books of Kings [i.e., 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings] and before Ezra and Nehemiah. Our English order of books derives from the LXX., but the name "Chronicles" comes from Jerome's Latin Vulgate version of 400 A.D.

The theme of the books is the centrality of Yahweh in the life of the nation, for he alone is their true sovereign. Hence, greatest emphasis is placed upon the many times in the history of the monarchy when the nation turned away from Yahweh and the few occasions of national reformation of true Yahwehist religion. The focus on Yahweh's rule naturally leads to interests in God's direct activity in history, patterns of divine retribution, scriptural authority and the centrality of the temple worship. Nevertheless, there is also a great interest in individuals and their place in the nation and the divine economy.

In spite of the clear interest in priestly matters and details of the temple worship, the witness of Yahweh's prophets to God's truth when kings and even priests corrupted, it is singled out repeatedly. The prophets viewed the division of David's kingdom into Judah [in the south] and Israel [in the north and east] as a great disaster. Written after the beginning of the restoration of Judah in the post-exilic period, Chronicles focuses almost exclusively on the Kingdom of Judah, after the glories of the golden age of David and Solomon is treated at length. Israel's future hope, however, is not grounded in the revival of the monarchy, even a Davidic one, but in a return to the obedient worship called for by Yahweh's faithful prophets. The virtues of obedient kings are dwelt upon while their vices are ignored. David, therefore, seems like a saint and comes close to replacing Moses as Israel's greatest religious patron.

Such a theological history is highly interpretive. Nevertheless, even where it ventures beyond the sources of Samuel and Kings, it has proven to *be* accurate archaeologically whenever it has been able to be tested. One of the most striking differences from Samuel and Kings is in its numbers. No uniform pattern has yet been discerned in these differences. Interpreting numbers is, of course, a general problem in Ancient Near Eastern studies, at least for modern, statistically-minded westerners.

## ANALYSIS OF 1 & 2 CHRONICLES:

1 Ch	1-9 10-29	Genealogies from Adam to the Exile. The reign of David.	[HTB V} The United Kingdom [HTB IV]
2 Ch	1-9 10-36	The reign of Solomon. The reigns of David's descendants in the Kingdom of Judah from the division of the United Kingdom down to its Exile.	The Divided Kingdoms [HTB V] The Kingdom of Judah [HTB VI]

1. How do the two accounts of Saul's great defeat and death compare? What differences of perspective do the different authors seem to have? How compatible are the two views? Does 1 Ch 10:13f give a complete explanation of Saul's downfall and defeat (1 S 28:16-19)? How fair is Chronicles' critique of Saul (1 S 28:6, 15; 1 Ch 10:13f)?
2. What can Christians learn about suicide and assisted suicide from the special case of Saul's death three millennia ago, when human life was generally held more cheaply? How do Saul's and his armour bearer's deaths compare to Ahimilech's honour death (Jg 9:53-55) and Samson's suicide mission (Jg 16:23-31)? Was Saul's armour bearer right to refuse to kill Saul? Why? Why did he himself commit suicide after Saul? What light does the Amalekite's account and actions throw upon these events (2 S 1:6-16)? Is suicide or euthanasia ever justified for Christians? What further quality and quantity of life concerns are at stake here? What situations today make such criteria more difficult to weigh? How do the following scriptures also illuminate aspects of this issue: Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17; 30:19; Jb 1:21; 2:4-10; Ac 16:27-30; 1 Co 6:16-20; Ep 5:29; Mk 8:34f; Jn 13:37; 15:12f; Ro 5:7; 14:7f; 2 Co 5:1-10; Ph 1:21-24; 1 In 3:16? What is your own conclusion?
3. Why were the men of Jabesh-gilead willing to risk their own lives to retrieve Saul's and his sons' remains (1 S 11:1-13)? What have you done for others that they might be grateful for over the years?
4. Can the apparently rather rare partial cremation of Saul's and his sons' bodies here, be taken as a biblical justification for the practice of complete cremation by some Christians today (Lv 20:14; 21:9; Js 7:15, 25; Is 30:33)? Why? Does the omission of any direct reference to cremation in 1 Ch 10:12 imply a later Jewish rejection of the practice? What other grounds might Christians today adduce for choosing to be cremated?
5. Why was it providential for David that he was not present at the battle of Mt. Gilboa? Can you recall any providential absences in your life? Have you thanked God for them? Why?

1. What do you think the Amalekite's real motives were in claiming to have helped Saul die and in returning Saul's crown and bracelet to David? How did he misjudge David? How have you ever been misjudged? What has been your response? How have you ever misjudged someone, even just in confusing what they would consider good and bad news? What were the consequences for you and/or others?
2. How does the "song of the bow" from the Book of Jashar serve David and the Israelites well as a lament for Saul and Jonathan? Do we use laments today? How? Why? Should they be used more frequently? Why? When?
3. How is David's character revealed in his love for both Jonathan and Saul, in spite of their very diverse treatment of him? On what basis did David evaluate Saul? What lessons are there here for you?
4. What possible reasons might David have had for praising the bravery and loyalty of the people of Jabesh-gilead at this particular time (1 S 31:11-13; 2 S 2:5-9 [consult a map of Israel])? Why also might David have postponed for many years, the repatriation of Saul's and his sons' bones for burial in their family plot in the territory of Benjamin (2 S 21:12-14)?
5. How do the characters of the two generals, Abner [Saul's cousin (1 S 14:50f) or uncle (1 Ch 8:33; 9:39)] and Joab [David's nephew by his older half sister, Zeruah (2 S 17:25; 1 Ch 2:15)] compare in the first of their many military and personal encounters? With which would you rather be partnered? How so?

1. How many wives did David seem to have early in his seven and a half years (2 S 2:2; 2:11) as king of Judah in Hebron (3:2-5, 13f)? Why do you think that was? Why did he want his first wife, Michal, back too?
2. How do the characters of the rival generals, Abner and Joab, continue to compare? Which would you rather have as your general? Why? What was David's evaluation of the two men?
3. Why didn't David have Joab, his nephew, executed then and there, as he did with the treacherous sons of Rimmon (4:11f)? As the king, was David right to leave the retribution to Yahweh (Ro 12:17-13:5)? Did he thereby really forgive Joab, or just give Joab the impression that he had? Why might it be that David have spared Joab during his own lifetime (1 K 2:28-35)? Have you also ever been in a situation when delayed retribution seemed in order? When? Why?
4. To what extent were the door-keeper and nurse responsible for the tragedy that befell Mephibosheth (4:4; 9:3, 13)? How well do you handle what may seem only small responsibilities? How well do you respond in apparent crises? Have others ever suffered the consequences of your mistake or failure? Are you totally responsible for their suffering? How do you cope with your degree of culpability? What do you do if you can't make things right again? How can God help you and all the others also involved?
5. How might Psalm 5 express David's attitude to treachery? Why is it appropriate to express such feelings in a prayer? What range of feelings do you feel comfortable expressing to God in prayer? What does this say about your concept of God and his character? What aspects of Yahweh's character are most relevant to David when talking to God about those who had been treacherous to himself? Is your real security against treachery the same as David's? Why?

TRAIL IV -- SECTION 16: 2 Samuel 5:1-25; 23:8-39; 1 Chronicles 11:1-12:40; 14:1-17 & Psalm 30.

1. Why did it take the rest of the tribes of Israel over seven years (2 S 2:10f) to act upon their stated reasons for now anointing David king of all Israel? What motives delayed them? What motives hinder you from doing what you claim to know is God's will? What roles do all of the tribes and all of the elders play in the coronation? Why is it significant that David was the instigator of the covenant with the elders before the coronation? What does the later Chronicles account add? What light does Chronicles shed upon David's earlier years as king of Judah in Hebron?
2. Why do you think David now found it now prudent to move his capital from the old major Judaic city of Hebron in the south, to the site of his own newly-captured Jebusite mountain-fortress of Jebus [Jerusalem]? What features made this particular location so advantageous for ruling his greatly-enlarged kingdom of Israel? What historic and recent tensions might it help heal? What is the significance to you of the modern archeological discovery of the ancient water shaft to the spring of Gihon that figured so significantly in the capture of Jerusalem?
3. Why do you think David took even more wives and concubines when he became king in Jerusalem? How did this extend his family? In what ways could this be both a familial and political time-bomb?
4. Where was David when he heard about the Philistines' attack (2 S 5:17; 23:13f; 1 Ch 11:15f)? What was the first thing he did? What distinct roles do David and Yahweh play in their military partnership? Who did David acknowledge as the senior partner (2 S 5:12, 20,25)? How was Yahweh involved for Eleazer (2 S 23:9) and Shammah (2 S 23:11f)? How significant is it that both the military leaders and Yahweh were involved in the Philistines' defeat? How different should it be in your partnership with God in your own particular Christian ministry / service (1 Co 3:5-9)?
5. What events prompted David to celebrate his new-felt security (2 S 5:9, 17-25; 7:1f; 1 Ch 11:8; Ps 30:7)? How appropriate is Ps 30 for that celebration? Why does he feel that he still needs Yahweh's mercy and protection? Why is he confident of receiving Yahweh's help? How relevant might Ps 30 be to you today? What are the bases of David's and your praise?

TRAIL IV -- SECTION 17: 2 Samuel 6:1-23 & 1 Chronicles 13:1-14; 15:1-16:43.

1. How had the Philistine priests sent the captured ark of Yahweh back to Israel 20 years before (1 S 6:17:1)? What did this indicate about the Philistines religious customs and their attitude towards Israel's god? How did the Israelites now move the ark from Abinadab's house to Jerusalem? Why was Abinadab's son Uzzah, one of the ark's caretakers, struck down dead (2 S 6:6f; 1 Ch 15:11-15; Ex 25:14f; Nu 4:5f, 15-20; 7:7-9; He 12:28f)? What were the impact and consequences this tragedy (a) on David and (b) on the people? Why might this have been a necessary reminder to God's people at this time? Did it make a difference three months later, when the ark was brought to Jerusalem (1 Ch 15:24; 2 S 6:13)? What did David learn from Yahweh's blessing of the family of Obed-Edom, even though he was a Gittite, a resident alien from the Philistine city of Gath (2 S 15:18), then living in Judah (Js 15:9)? Why might David have given Obed-Edom such an important role in the procession and afterwards (1 Ch 15:21, 24: 16:5, 37f; 1 Ch 26:4-8, 15)?
2. Whose view on the appropriate ways to praise Yahweh appeals to you most, David's or Michal's? Why? Why was Michal so upset? What was David's response? Why do you think the Chronicles, notwithstanding its general interest in ceremonial details, plays down this particular incident? How do you express joy and thanksgiving to Yahweh (Ps 30:11f)? How might liturgical dance be appropriate in Christian worship services today? When? Where? By whom?
3. What can be learned from Chronicles' account of the ark's procession about the great importance of music in the corporate worship of Yahweh (1 Ch 15:16-29; 16:4-7)? How important is music in the public worship of your congregation? How important is that to you personally? What more could music do to facilitate your congregation's worship? How might it enhance your family and private worship?
4. What does 1 Ch 15:26 suggest about the partnership between the Levitical carriers of the Ark of the covenant and Yahweh himself that might throw light upon proper religious ceremony, worship, liturgy and service/ ministry? How important is it to follow Yahweh's guidelines, so that the divine-human partnership will function properly (1 Ch 15:15)?
5. What does 1 Ch 13:1-4 suggest about David's style of leadership at this stage of his reign?
6. What does the psalm of 1 Ch 16:6-36 tell those who praise Yahweh to do (vv. 8-22, 34-36)? How do the verbs of vv. 8-12 bring out the various aspects of praise? Which of these aspects need to be further developed in your praise of Yahweh? Why should God's people praise him? Why should everyone, even everything, on earth praise him (vv. 23-33)? What do you praise Yahweh for most? In what way could you use this psalm to praise Yahweh? What is suggested about the Book of Psalms by the fact that the psalm here is virtually identical with the first half of Ps 105 plus all of Ps 96?

1. Can you understand the prophet Nathan's first reaction to David's offer to build Yahweh a suitable home? Have you ever discovered that your first reaction, however appropriate it seemed at the time, had to be revised considerably on the basis of God's revelation? Were you, like Nathan, able to change your position publicly? Why? How hard is that for you to do?
2. What different sort of house did Yahweh have in mind to build for and through David? How was David's hope denied, modified and transformed well beyond his imagination? Have you ever had a comparable experience of Yahweh's dealings in your life? What had Yahweh already done to accomplish his good purpose with David? What still had to be done? How did Yahweh's promise to David influence the Israelites' hope for a Messiah [Anointed One] in later ages (Ps 89:3; 132:11f; Is 9:6f; Jr 23:5f; 30:9; 33:15f; Ek 34:23f; 37:24f; Ho 3:5; Mk 12:35; Jn 7:42; Ro 1:1-3)?
3. What is involved in Yahweh being a person's Father (2 S 7:14; 1 Ch 17:13; 22:10; 28:6f; Dt 8:5; Ps 103:13; He 12:7-10)? How does this apply to your personal relationship to God? Why might the Fatherhood of God often be more problematic for daughters than for sons?
4. What does David's prayer reveal about (a) his own character, (b) his relationship to God and (c) his understanding of Yahweh's character? What do your prayers reveal about these same things? Does anything need to be changed? Why?
5. What differences do you note between the accounts of the Books of Samuel and Chronicles here? What real difference do they make? Why?

TRAIL IV -- SECTION 19: 2 Samuel 8:1-18;. 1 Chronicles 18:1-17 & Psalm 60.

1. With the help of a map, where were David's victories? What reasons do the accounts give for David's successes? What are your successes? To what do you attribute them? Why? What has Yahweh got to do with them?
2. How does David's treatment of the spoils of war (1 S 8:7-12) compare to how he treated the prisoners and the captured gods (1 Ch 14:8-12)? Why (Dt 7:5)?
3. What is revealed about how David governed by 2 S 8:15-18; 20:23-26 and 1 Ch 18:14-17? How diversified was his leadership team? What signs of nepotism are there? How are things different today in your country? Why?
4. How do the accounts of Books of Samuel and Chronicles differ here? How important are these differences? Which account shows the most signs of being the original one? Why? Which account fits best with the later title to Psalm 60?
5. How does Ps 60:1-5 present David's first response to the news that Edom was attacking from the southeast, taking advantage of the fact that he was fully occupied fighting the city states of Aram/ Syria [Zorba, Damascus and Hamath] in the north-east? What was God's response in Ps 60:6-8? What is the theme of the final section of the Psalm? How do David's thoughts progress throughout his prayer? Are you able to talk to God in a similar way? Why? What do you think about what is said about the causes of success and failure? Did Edom's surprise attack succeed (2 S 8:13f, 1 Ch 18:12f; Ps 60 title)? If this Psalm was intended for teaching (Title), what did it teach then? What might it teach today?

TRAIL IV -- SECTION 20: 2 Samuel 9:1-10:19 & 1 Chronicles 19:1-19.

1. What motivated David to be kind to Mephibosheth (1 S 20:14-17, 42; 2 S 4:4)? Who is the reason for God's great kindness to us? Do you cope with kindness the same way Mephibosheth did with David's? Why?
2. Why might David's kindness be properly called "the kindness of God" (2 S 9:1, 3)? What circumstances might render your kindness to others also like God's (Mt 5:16, 43-48)?
3. Have you ever mistaken someone's good intentions for evil ones? When? Why? What were the consequences for you and the others involved? How well do you receive others' sympathy when you are grieving? How so?
4. Have you ever approached a major challenge the way Joab did here? What do you think Joab meant by his brief reference to Yahweh (2 S 10:12; 1 Ch 19:13)? How much faith in Yahweh do you think he really had? How great does your faith have to be for Yahweh to act for you and your cause (Mt 17:20; Mk 9:24)? How can you exercise whatever faith in Yahweh that you do have?
5. From this incident, what can you add to your sketch of Joab's character?

1. Why do you think the Chronicler shortened the account of this incident so drastically? Have you ever given such an expurgated account of an incident to someone? Why? Was it really justified then, or later? How so?
2. What were the stages in the development of David's sinning here? Have you ever experienced how one sin can lead to others and even escalate like this? Describe. How did the unusual circumstances presented in 2 S 11:1f help set the stage for the whole affair? How was David responsible that some of these circumstances existed? When have you ever found yourself creating circumstances that make temptation and sinning more likely? How?
3. Why do you think that Uriah the Hittite, a resident alien who was one of David's select mighty men (2 S 23:39; 1 Ch 11:41), disobeyed David's clear and direct orders? Would you have done so under the circumstances? Why?
4. To what extent do you think Joab knew about David's intentions and was, therefore, a willing accomplice both after and before the fact (1 S 18:21, 25; 2 S 11:20, 25)? Have you ever been drawn into someone else's sinning in a similar way? What could Joab and you have done differently? Was David more concerned about Joab's view of what had happened to Uriah than with Yahweh's view of it (2 S 11:25; 12:9)?
5. How was Nathan's way of calling David to account and repentance particularly appropriate for Yahweh's anointed king (Ex 20:13f; 1 S 10:25; 12:13-15)? Why did Yahweh view David as wielding the Amorite sword that actually killed Uriah (2 S 12:9)? What can you learn from David's situation about repentance, forgiveness and discipline (He 12:6-11)? Who is the primary object of David's sin (2 S 12:9f, 14; Ps 51:4)? Why? Do you respond, as David did, to anyone pointing out your sins, even in an indirect way? How so?
6. How appropriate were David's punishments? Would you have faced the mortal sickness and death of your beloved child the same way David did? Why? What does Yahweh's response to the birth of Bathsheba's second son by David indicate about whether he also blamed her for the sordid affair (2 S 12:24f)?
7. Why do you think David now treated the Ammonite prisoners differently (12:31) than the way that he had recently treated Syrian ones (1 S 8:2, 4f, 13f; 10:18)?

1. As its later superscription suggests, how well does Ps 51 express David's personal prayer of confession after being confronted by Nathan about his affair with Bathsheba? How suitable a model might it be for many of God's peoples' confession? In the prayer's actual confession section (vv. 1-6), what are the meanings of the various terms used to describe sinning? Which terms fit your sinning most often? Why might anyone hope that God would blot out a sin? Do you usually really know you have sinned, without someone pointing it out (v. 3)? Do you think David really did in this case? Is sin always ultimately against God (v. 4)? Why? Is it usually only against God? How so? In what sense could sinning be inherited (v. 5)? What have inner truth and wisdom to do with true confession (v. 6)?
2. In the supplication [personal request] section (vv. 7-12), what is asked for besides God's basic forgiveness? Which of these requests are very important for all sinners? How so? Which of them should you consider including regularly in your confessional prayers?
3. In the response section (vv. 13-17), what responses are deemed appropriate to God's pardon? How much do they depend upon God's help? Are you as aware as David was that nothing in the Mosaic sacrificial system dealt with deliberate sinning (v. 16) and, therefore, sacrifices were not appropriate in his situation? What human sacrifice could atone for sin anyway? How easy is it to offer to God the appropriate sacrifice of "a broken and contrite heart"? How do vv. 18f fit with the rest of the psalm (a) for David or (b) for a model of a prayer of confession for God's people? Why might this last section have been included in the public collection of Israel's psalms?
4. What would be a suitable outline for Ps 32 as a more general psalm of confession? What are the stages of a sinner's spiritual and psychological progression from denial to being forgiven? Which of these experiences are you familiar with? Do you sometimes get stuck partway through the sequence? Why?
5. When is the best time to repent? Why? Who is speaking in vv. 8f? What does the comparison with a horse or a mule illustrate? How can a sinner become righteous (vv. 1f, 10)? What about Yahweh leads the righteous to gladness and singing (vv. 10f)? Have you experienced this recently?
6. How are these two psalms similar and different? In both of them, which of Yahweh's characteristics are emphasized in relation to human sin, guilt, forgiveness, trust, joy and righteousness? Why are they so connected?

1. Have you ever had a shrewd friend like Jonadab (13:3-5), who suggested an alternative way to get what you want? Did his plan succeed? Why didn't Ammon heed Tamar's protests and even her marriage suggestion (13:12f, 16)? What does it say about his love, that it turned so quickly into hatred? What sort of love tends to do that? How helpful was Absalom's subsequent advice to Tamar (13:20)? Why wasn't it helpful even to himself (13:22, 32)? What kind of king would Ammon, David's firstborn son, have made if he had lived to continue the Davidic dynasty?
2. How would you rate David as a father here? Where did he fail each of Ammon, Tamar, Absalom and himself? What do you think he should have done? What did he do right? How does God deal with his children's sinfulness in a better way? How do you deal with your relatives' sins?
3. Why did Absalom flee and take self-imposed exile in the nearby Kingdom of Geshur in particular (2 S 3:3)? For how many sons was David mourning (2 S 13:37)? Can some bereavements be even harder to console than others are (13:37-39)? What factors helped David to be consoled in his bereavement? How did his later feelings for Absalom set the stage for his return (2 S 4:1)?
4. How had Nathan's prophetic prediction from Yahweh (2 S 12:10-12) already begun to be fulfilled? How is this a fitting consequence to David's own sin (Jb 4:8; Ga 6:7)? Can you sympathize with David?
5. What further insight do you get into Joab's character here? How does his indirect approach to David compare with Nathan's earlier one (2 S 12)? What do you make of the wisdom of the woman of Tekoa in 14:14 & 17 about God? What did she mean? How do we all sometimes need a change of perspective to see things correctly from God's point of view? How can stories help us in this? How hard was it still for David to forgive Absalom? Why? When is forgiveness hardest for you?
6. What are your first impressions of Absalom? How so?

1. How could David and so many others be so blind to Absalom's ambitions? Can you identify with David's blindness, especially to his children? Why? Have you ever been the victim of such behind the scenes manipulation and deceit? How so? On the other hand, have you, like Absalom, used spiritual/ religious reasons to cover your real intentions? What did your deception gain you? Was it worth it? Why?
2. What might the fact that some ancient translations [versions] of 2 S 15:7 read "4 years" rather than the traditionally received [Masoretic] Hebrew text's "40 years", suggest about the state of the latter Hebrew text to textual critics who are seeking to recover the original written text? In your opinion, which of the two possible Hebrew texts here seems most likely to be the one the author originally wrote? Which one seems most difficult to harmonize with both the immediate context and larger contexts (1 K 2:11)? Should it, therefore, be deemed (a) more or (b) less suspect of being the original reading?
3. Why did David flee his fortified capital, Jerusalem and even abandon it to his son, Absalom? Why do you think he sent the ark of the covenant back into the city with the chief priests? What roles did he want his friends to play for him in the city?
4. How did the rebellion reveal some individual's true character? How did David respond to these discoveries? How similar is your response to such revelations? What situations bring out your true worth?
5. If Cush (Ps 7 title) is Shimei, how might Psalm 7 throw some light upon David's thinking in his response to the angry attack of Shimei (2 S 16:12)? How is David's way of imagining God relevant to his own situation? On what grounds does he appeal to Yahweh? How does he see God's judgement overtaking the wicked (Ps 57:6)? How does v. 17 relate to the rest of Ps 7? When might you be able to use this psalm as a model prayer? How could you modify it to suit your particular circumstances? How does this psalm help to substantiate the claim that "there is a psalm for every occasion"?

1. What was the rationale of Ahithophel's first advice to Absalom? How wise was it? How much of David's defeatist attitude might be due to his recalling Nathan's earlier prophecy (2 S 12:1f)? How might a similar prophecy have affected your attitude? Why?
2. Why was Ahithophel's second advice wiser in comparison to Hushai's (2 S 16:23)? How did Hushai and Yahweh employ human psychology to answer David's prayer (2 S 15:31)? Have you ever taken less than the best advice? Why?
3. How would you describe Ahithophel's character? How can a position of great respect (2 S 16:23) be very dangerous? Have you ever been in such a position? Have you ever put someone else in such a position? With what results? Have you ever felt much as Ahithophel did when his good advice went unheeded (1 S 17:23)? Why do you think he committed suicide? Is such a suicide justified? Why? Is suicide ever justified? Why?
4. What role do women play in warning David to cross the Jordan River without delay? How important are common women's roles in God's economy? Why? What further significant roles have some women played in the Bible's narrative so far? What about in your life?
5. How might Psalms 3 and 4 be suitable psalms for David to pray on the morning (Ps 3:5) and evening (Ps 4:8) after he and his retinue fled across the Jordan River? How important is Ps 4:8 to you (Ps 121:4ff; Is 40:28)? How do you know that Yahweh hears you when you call upon him (Ps 3:4; 4:1, 3)? Does what helped David also help you to tremble in fear/ reverence but not sin (Ps 4:4f)? Is Yahweh the source of your glory, gladness, peace, strength, protection, security, deliverance and retribution? How so?

1. How might David have felt about his reception in Mahanaim (17:27-29)? When have you experienced God's similar incarnate care? How much did it mean to you?
2. How did the people's advice to David to remain secure in Mahanaim fit with the counsel of Ahithophel that Absalom ultimately rejected (17:1-4)? What do you consider positive and negative about Joab's character and actions here? Why? How mixed is your own character and behaviour? Why did Joab deliberately disobey his sovereign's express public orders concerning Absalom (17:25; 18:5, 12)? Why did David still respect and heed Joab? How do you deal with such insubordination? Why?
3. Why do you think Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the priest (15:27), tried to get the news to David first, but wouldn't tell David all that he knew (18:20, 28f)? What was good and bad about David's great concern for Absalom? How much can you identify with David here? Has anyone been your Joab-like counsellor (19:5-8)? Why? How? How wise was Joab's rebuke and advice? How well might you have taken these?
4. How ironic is it that Absalom's famous monument near Jerusalem doesn't seem to have marked his final resting place (18:17f)? What does its construction suggest about Absalom's character? What does 18:18 suggest might have happened to Absalom's three sons (14:17)? How significant is it that he named his beautiful daughter after his violated and revenged sister Tamar (13:1, 20, 28f, 32; 14:17)? Who do you name your children after? Why?
5. What qualities of David are revealed in how he dealt with his enemies and friends in the wake of Absalom's rebellion?
6. In light of the build-up to Sheba's rebellion (2 S 19:8-10, 11-15, 40-43; 20:11), what seems to have been the state of rivalry between Judah and the other Israelite tribes late in David's reign? How ancient and deep were the roots of this rivalry (2 S 8-11; 3:1; 5:1-5; Gn 29f; 37; 43f; 48)? Why, then, did David consider Sheba's rebellion far more dangerous than Absalom's (20:6)? How, in his attempts to regain the favour of the tribe of Judah (8:16; 19:13; 20:9-12) who had hosted Absalom's coronation in Hebron (15:10), did David unwittingly sign a death warrant of his nephew, Amasa, who had been Absalom's general (17:25) and now his own, replacing Joab (19:13)? Why was David unwilling to wait for his new army commander (19:13), Amasa, to return from the south to himself in Jerusalem, before he sent the rest of his army with Joab and his brother Abishai to pursue Sheba further north (20:51)? How did this precipitate the fateful meeting of the rival army commanders in Gibeon on the road north without David's mediating presence (20:8-13; 22)? Have you ever unwittingly harmed others by your misjudgments of people and situations? Why did the murderer prosper here (19:13; 20:23)?

TRAIL IV -- SECTION 27: 2 Samuel 21:1-22:51· 1 Chronicles 20:4-8 & Psalm 18.

1. Why has Chronicles been totally silent about the two rebellions presented in such detail in 2 Samuel?
2. In the first of the six miscellaneous appendices that conclude 2 Samuel (21:1-14 [note the two Mephibosheths: nephew (v. 7) and uncle (v.8)]), what can we learn from David about (a) genocide, (b) vengeance, (c) corporate guilt, (d) prayer, (e) keeping oaths sworn in Yahweh's name, (f) suffering for one's ancestors' sins (Ex 34:7), (g) learning from another's good example and (h) respecting Yahweh's anointed leaders?
3. What giants have posed problems in your life? How have they been dealt with? Were all your giants also somehow related to each other? How so?
4. Since the superscription is quite general, where in David's life do you think the psalm of 2 S 22 fits best? How similar is this psalm to Ps 18? Which do you think is the original one? Why? Which one do you like better? Why?
5. What parts of either version of the psalm would you find hard to echo as a Christian? What parts of the psalm best express your own experience of Yahweh to date? What characteristics of God are emphasized here? What images might communicate these qualities better to people today? How much have you experienced God to be like this? What more would you like to experience of Yahweh? How might that be possible?

TRAIL IV -- SECTION 28: 2 Samuel 24:1-25 & 1 Chronicles 21:1-22:1; 27:1-24.

1. How can you reconstruct the historic numbering of Israel from these two accounts (2 S 24:1-25, 1 Ch 27:1-24)? What do they have in common? What different details and perspectives do they contribute?
2. What can be learned about David's character here? Why *was* this sin of David (a) so bad (Pr 16:5; Jr 17:5), (b) that even Joab was alarmed (1 Ch 21:3f, 6; 27:23f) and (c) that it called forth a greater judgement on Israel than had even David's adultery and murder (2 S 12:9-18)? How could God's judgement fall on David by punishing the innocent people whom David considered his sheep (2 S 24:17; 1 Ch 21:17)? How hard would this be on a shepherd-like king? How did David discover that he had foolishly and greatly sinned (2 S 24:10; 1 Ch 21:7f)? How do you discover that you have sinned? How do you respond then? Why?
3. Which of the three optional judgments given to David would you have chosen? Why? Why did David choose the third option? What does that say about his view of God? Does that fit with your view of him?
4. What does this incident of judgement reveal about the character of Yahweh, our God? How significant is the exact location where he chooses to stop the judgement (2 S 24:16; 1 Ch 21:15; 2 Ch 3:1; Gn 12:2f)? Have you witnessed such detailed divine planning in your life? In your congregation's life? When? How does David interpret Yahweh's choice of location and connect it with his earlier guidance (2 S 24:25; 1 Ch 21:28-22:1; 2 S 7:1-7, 12f; 12:24f)? How do you connect together your insights into God's revealed will for your life?
5. How did Yahweh/ the angel of Yahweh work in partnership with Gad to minister to David here (1 Ch 21: 9-12, 18f)? What insight might this give into the divine-human functional relationship involved in any true spiritual ministry / service (1 Co 3:9)?
6. What principle might be drawn from David's answer to Araunah/ Oman (2 S 24:24; 1 Ch 21:24)? How could you apply it in your life? In your congregation's life? Was it a significant factor that the seller was a Jebusite rather than an Israelite, and might, therefore, not have been a Yahwehist like David? Would that affect the principle? Why?

## INTRODUCTION TO 1 & 2 KINGS.

The two books of kings form a single unit in the Hebrew Bible in the Former Prophets section. The present somewhat arbitrary division originated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC Greek LXX translation and was followed in Jerome's Latin Vulgate in 400 AD. The books give an account of the complete history of the kings and kingdoms following David's reign. The account bears the marks of a single author using as his sources various more contemporary documents including prophetic memories. The whole is written from a religious and prophetic point of view, not from that of a secular historian. Therefore, certain of the kings, most important to their Ancient Near Eastern contemporaries, e.g., Omri, Uzziah [Azariah], and Jeroboam II, are passed over in virtual silence, while two periods of religious crisis for God's people, the reigns of Ahab in Israel [in the north] and Hezekiah in Judah [in the south], are treated at much greater length.

The books' common theme is that Israel [both Israel and Judah] as the redeemed people of King Yahweh, bears his name and her kings are his representatives. Thus, a wicked king is a paradox as well as historically evil, and a good king's righteous acts reveal the reign of Yahweh himself. Prophetic activity is generally most prominent in the reigns of wicked kings. The sins of the people, both in the north and the south, lead to their respective captivities. Political incidents are judged to be the effects of the fidelity or infidelity of God's people.

### ANALYSIS OF 1 & 2 KINGS:

1K 1:1-2:12 2:13-11:43	The last days of David. The reign of Solomon.	The United Kingdom of Israel continues [HTB IV]
12:1-14:31 15:1-16:28	The division of the Kingdom. The wars between Israel and Judah.	The Divided Kingdoms of Judah and Israel [HTB V]
1 K 16:29-2 K 1:18 2K 2:1-10:36 11:1-17:41	The Elijah cycle. The Elisha cycle. From Jehu's revolt to the fall of Samaria.	
2K 18:1-23:30 22:1-23:30 23:31-25:30	Judah and the Assyrian Empire. The reforms of Josiah. The last days of Judah.	The Kingdom of Judah [HTB VI]

TRAIL IV -- SECTION 29: 1 Chronicles 22:2-19 & 1 Kings 1:1-53.

1. What factors around the building of David's own palace (2S 5:11f; 7:11) may have helped him to see and accept God's revelation forbidding his building of a temple for Yahweh (2 S 7:5-7, 11-13)? Nevertheless, how did David satisfy his desire to build Yahweh's house (1 Ch 22:5)? What are the several ways that David made preparation for the temple's construction according to (a) to 2 S 8:7f, 10f, (b) 2 S 24:21, 24f, 1 Ch 21:18f, 24-30; 22:1, (c) 1 K 5:1-6, 12, 17f and (d) 1 Ch 28:11-13, 19? How does his preparation illustrate the communal character of the building up of God's church (1 Co 5-7)? How do you handle leaving the completion of the aspect of God work that you have become deeply involved in to your successors in the faith? How much have you been building upon the previous work of earlier people of God? Which house of David, however, does Yahweh promise will last forever (2 S 7:12-16)?
2. Why do you think the new sanctuary was not only to be "the house of Yahweh God" (1 Ch 22:1, 11) but also a house to/for "the name of Yahweh" (1 K 5:5; 1 Ch 22:7; 28:3; 2 Ch 2:1,4)? Why the emphasis on God's covenant name, "Yahweh" (2 S 7:13)? Why do English speaking Christians tend to neglect to use the name, "Yahweh", so frequently used and celebrated in the Old Testament?
3. How did the *coup d'etat* by David's fourth son, Adonijah, unfold? Who supported him? Who opposed him? Why? Why was Bathsheba the key person for Nathan recruit to motivate the aged and invalided David to act on Solomon's succession in the nick of time (1 K 1:1-3, 15)? How well did Solomon handle the arrest and plea of his half-brother and rival, Adonijah? Why do you think Chronicles makes no mention of this rough aspect of the succession?
4. What are the stages through which Solomon came to the throne of all Israel (2 S 12:24f, 1 Ch 22:6; 23:1; 29:1-25; 1 K 1:5ff; 2:15-25)? According to the account of the last stage (1 Ch 29:11,25), who did Solomon rule for, and where did he get his majesty from? How different is political sovereignty in the New Testament (Ro 13:1-7)? How might the transition of political power have been smoother for Solomon? How could this be viewed as yet another of David's many family problems (2 S 12:1f)? How might the way the succession was actually settled, have further alienated David's royal family from the elders of Judah and Israel, whose good will was so vital to the nation's unity and well-being [Hebrew = "shalom"] (2 S 19:41-20:2; 1 K 12:16-19)? What could be learned from this about the succession of leaders in Christian congregations today? Who do Christian leaders lead for and with (Ep 1:22; 4:15; 1 Co 12:7)? Nevertheless, whose support do they need in the congregation?
5. In David's charge to Solomon and the people (1 Ch 22:7-19): (a) what did he identify as the all-important secret of success, and (b) what was to be done prior to the building of the temple? What do both (a) and (b) imply about doing God's work in God's way?
6. What do you think of the special therapy for the ailing David (1 K 1:1-4)? Could anyone claim that it was precedent setting?

1. In the account of the administrative organization that David set up for regular public worship (ch. 23-26) and the maintenance of the temple Solomon would build (ch. 17), what are the special ministries of the priests [sons of Aaron] and the rest of the Levites [the other sons of Levi]? Why would some of the Levites' traditional ministries soon become obsolete? How were they to be reassigned to serve / minister? Why is it important for a servant/ minister of God to find a new vocation when the old one is no longer possible or needed? How does this apply to Christian ministers as functional members of Christ's Body, the church (1 Co 12:7; Ro 12:5; Ep 4:7, 16; 1 P 4:10)?
2. What parallel(s) do you see between this elaborate division of labour within the unified public worship of Yahweh and the New Testament's teaching on the diversity of ministries within the unified Body of Christ (1 Co 12:4-30; Ro 12: 4-8; Ep 4:7, 11-16; 1 P 4:10f)? How are the unity and diversity of Christian ministries in your congregation represented in its public worship services?
3. Why might it be that the ministry of music is described here as "prophecy" (25:1-5; Ep 5:18-20)? How should it speak of and for God to you? Does it regularly? Why?
4. Why do you think David in his last year reorganized the local level of his kingdom's judicial system and reassigned it to the Levitical families (26:29-32) who lived in cities widely distributed throughout the kingdom (Js 21; 1 Ch 6:39-66)?
5. Why do you think so much less detail is given by the Chronicler about the civil and military administration of David's kingdom and household (27:25-34) than about the future sanctuary's worship? Yet why are such secular details given at all? Why would even the king's friend and advisor be listed? Why might it have been important for a king that these were two different roles played by different people? Is it important for Christian clergy to have both friends and even advisors? Should they be from the congregation? Why? Who has God provided to be your friend(s)? What about your advisor(s)? Who do you trust to play each role? Why?

1. How important is it for you to remember that Yahweh "searches the hearts and understands every intent of the thoughts" (28:9; 1 S 16:7)? How does that make You feel? Why? What implications does David draw from it in the immediate context? How might that apply to you?
2. How universal for God's people is the promise and warning David gave to Solomon in the next breath (29:9; Dt 4:29; 2 Ch 15:2; Jr 29:13; Mt 7:7)? What does it mean to you that the promise and warning are so closely linked?
3. In the two charges that David gave to Solomon here (28:9f; 20f): (a) what was to be Solomon's primary duty; (b) what characteristics of God was he to depend on; (c) what were the resources provided for his special ministry; (d) what were to be the grounds of his confidence, and (e) what, therefore, was to be the manner and spirit of his own ministry? What light does this throw upon your own call to be a minister/ servant of God today?
4. Do you think the written plan that David presented to Solomon for the new sanctuary and its furnishings was a brand new one just revealed to him by Yahweh (1 Ch 28:11-19), or was David pointing to the ancient, revealed plans written for the tent of meeting in Moses' books? Could it have been a blend of the two? In any case, what was David asserting about the designs he presented to Solomon? Has that any relevance to you? How so?
5. What can we Christians learn about the stewardship of all of our God-given resources as individuals, as congregations, and as nations from: (a) David's call for a free-will offering for the new temple (29:1-9), (b) the people's and the government's response to the invitation (vv. 9f), (c) David's prayer of adoration and thanksgiving (vv. 10-19), and (d) the people's worship and celebration which followed (vv. 20-22)?

TRAIL IV -- SECTION 32: 1 Kings 2:1-9; 2 Samuel 23:1-7; 1 Chronicles 29:26-30 & 1 Kings 2:10-46.

1. Is David in 2 S 23: 1f claiming Yahweh's inspiration for this and his many other psalms? Can you find a close parallel meaning between some of David's last words here and his final charge to his successor, Solomon (1 K 2:1-4)?
2. What might the context of the reference to the written "law [Hebrew = "torah"] of Moses" in 1 K 2:3 suggest, about which part of the Pentateuch [the Five Books] was available in writing by the time of transition of power from David to Solomon [about 970 BC]? How aware of Ex 21:44 does Solomon seem to be, with respect to Joab's seeking sanctuary at the altar of God (1 K 2:28-34)?
3. How was Solomon: (a) just as wise and tolerant as David, (b) just as realistic as David, and (c) a ruler who lived by his express word? When is it right to deny someone the traditional right to claim to sanctuary (Ex 21:12-14; 2 S 3:27; 20:9f; 1 K 1:7; 2:28-34)? What was the history of the fulfillment of Yahweh's judgement on Eli's family (1 S 2:22-30; 3:11-14; 4:11; 14:3; 22:9-20; 2 S 19:11; 1K 1:7; 2:26f)? How did all of this help to firmly establish the kingdom in Solomon's hands (1 K 2:12, 46)?
4. Why do you think Solomon at first spared Adonijah? Why would Adonijah approach Solomon indirectly through his mother, Bathsheba (1 K 2:13-18)? In light of his request for Abishag and its political implications (2 S 16:21f; 20:3; 1K 1:14; 2:16-24), how sincere could Adonijah's claim really be to be submitting to Solomon (1 K 1:53) and to Yahweh's will that Solomon be king (1 K 2:15)? How deeply do you submit to Yahweh's will, when you do not like it? Have you ever sought to find a way around God's will even while you were professing submission to him? How far would that get you with the living God, Yahweh?
5. What do you think the Chronicler meant by his references to sources about the history of David's reign in 1 Ch 1:29? Is he saying (a) that they were still extant and generally available in his day [sometime after the 6<sup>th</sup> century exile], (b) that they were the sources of 2 Samuel and 1 Kings which he evidently was following rather closely, (c) that they were the sources of what he was adding to the account of 2 Samuel and 1 Kings, (d) that they offered even more information about David's reign than what he was recording? How could we today tell which of the above meanings was intended? What difference would it make to us now? How significant is it that all of the sources specified here are prophetic ones? Should biblical scholars, then, pay somewhat more attention to the Chronicler's interest in prophetic activities than they have tended to, as well as their focusing upon his well-recognized interest in cultic and priestly matters? How might this temper the common tendency to polarize the historical perspectives of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles as prophetic versus priestly?

1. Why were the tent of meeting and the ark of the covenant now in two different locations (1K 3:1, 15; 1 Ch 16:1, 37-40; 21:29; 2 Ch 1:3f, 13)? How could that have contributed to the highly decentralized worship in Israel by the beginning of Solomon's reign (1 K 3:2)? Why, then, should Solomon have been censured for worshipping at the high places as even Samuel himself had done (1 S 9:12f; 19:25; 1 K 3:3f)?
2. How do the two accounts of Solomon's dream at Gibeon compare? How does each illuminate the other? How are wisdom, knowledge and discernment related to "a heart/ mind with skills in hearing/ understanding"? Could Solomon have asked for an even better gift from Yahweh (Ex 33:13f)? How might such a gift of wisdom might have helped to change his relationship to the false gods of his foreign wives (1 K 3:1; 11:1-13)? How did his poor example here provide a very shaky spiritual foundation for the kingdom's future (1 K 2:3f)? What can Christian leaders learn from this today?
3. How does Solomon demonstrate his wisdom in the case of the two prostitutes? How does your wise practice demonstrate that you have "a heart/ mind with skill in hearing/ understanding"? How would people recognize that the wisdom of God was in you? Who, therefore, should they praise (Mt 5:16)?
4. How does the extent of Solomon's kingdom compare with the land promised to Abraham (Gn 15:18-21) and the Israelites (Ex 23:31; Nu 34:1-15; Dt 1:7f [consult a map if necessary])?
5. How could the invaluable role played by David's friend, Hushai, (2 S 15-17; 1 Ch 27:33) have prompted Solomon to make sure that he too had an official friend (1 K 4:5)? Why did even such a wise king need a special friend? Is this any less true for political leaders today? What about Christian spiritual leaders? Who is your special friend? How does she/ he function?

1. How would you describe the great range of wisdom attributed to Solomon here and in Pr 10:1-27:16? How does it go well beyond the wisdom he asked Yahweh for (1K 3:9-12)? Is he considered as wise today as he was then? Why? Who else in biblical history had a reputation for a wide range of wisdom? Why did Jesus claim that his wisdom was greater than Solomon's (Mt 12:42)? What should this mean for Christians (Mt 7:24-27)? In what limited spheres do you have some wisdom to share? Who is the source of whatever type of wisdom you have as a Christian (Gn 41:38; Ex 28:3; 31:3; 35:31; 1 Co 12:8; Ja 1:5)? What should it to be used for (1 Co 12:7; Ep 4:12, 16)?
2. In Ps 127, which was traditionally attributed to Solomon, what are the sections of the psalm and how are they related? Based upon your own life's experience what would you like to add to Solomon's brief list of vanities [useless endeavours]? Would you agree with those that he has listed? How are Jesus' words in Mt 7:24-27 similar? However, what can make human toil not in vain (Jn 15:5; 1 Co 15:58; 1 P 4:1f)? How would taking this wisdom to heart change your lifestyle?
3. Can you agree with Solomon's view of children? How so? Does it apply equally to sons and daughters? Why do you think the gift of children is contrasted with a list of vanities? Do you view all of your children as Yahweh's gift? What difference might it make to do so? Are you proud of how your children deal with their enemies in the public square? How so?
4. How might the editorial note just after Ps 72 (v. 20) and its traditional association with Solomon in its superscription, suggest who might have written this psalm and on what occasion? How well might its unique position at the end of book two of the psalter, and its special contents, support this deduction?
5. What should be the primary characteristics of Yahweh's anointed ruler? What results flow from his character? What, therefore, do the people wish about him? Why do they so? How relevant is this wish today for contemporary monarchs? How does the character of the monarch as described in v. 1 undergird the entire psalm and lead to the doxology of vv. 18f? If as some scholars see this psalm also pointing beyond David's great son, great son Solomon, to an even greater son of David, even to Yahweh's Messiah [Anointed One], how well does it apply to Jesus of Nazareth?

1. How does Solomon slightly adapt for Hiram's ears Yahweh's reasons for not allowing David to build his sanctuary (1 K 5:2f; 1 Ch 22:8f; 28:2f)? How have you felt it necessary to make slight adjustments of reasons and even facts to suit your present situation and hearers? What might have been Solomon's motive here? What were your motives? Were the adjustments you made innocent and harmless? Were Solomon's? How so?
2. What does Solomon tell his pagan friend about Yahweh? What do you tell your non-Christian friends about God in your passing conversations? Why was this an appropriate time for Solomon to say such things about Yahweh? What does Hiram's reply indicate about his own relationship to Yahweh (1 K 5:7; 2 Ch 2:11f)? How much can the people you relate to learn about God from their exposure to your life and words? If they were to accurately feed back to you what they have been hearing, would you recognize the God in whom you profess to believe? What might be missing? Can what is missing be communicated to them? Should it be? How?
3. Why was it important for Yahweh to remind Solomon of the basic conditions of his commitment to him and his father, right in the middle of the process of building his great and wonderful temple (1 K 6:11-13)? How impressed was Yahweh by the magnificence of his new house? How aware was Solomon of this (2 Ch 2:6)?
4. What does Chronicles' later account add to Kings' earlier account of the building of the temple? What do these additions indicate about the special interests of the Chronicler?
5. In light of the care for detail, design and quality of materials, how important are *arts* and crafts people to the building of Yahweh's new house? How important are they today for the Christian congregations that you know? Why? How does the half-Israelite and half-Tyrian [Phoenician] skilled craftsman, Hiram-abi/ Hiram (2 Ch 2:13; 1 K 7:13), compare to Bezalel, the multi-talented Israelite designer and general contractor of the Mosaic tent of meeting and its furnishings (Ex 35:30-36)? Why might it be expected that the designs and decorations of the new sanctuary would evidence some Phoenician and even some cosmopolitan Ancient Near Eastern influences? Would that really make it any less suitable as Yahweh's house (2 Ch 2:5f)? Why?

1. If the temple of Solomon that took four years to build was magnificent, what about the palace / house of Solomon that took thirteen years to build? What other building projects was Solomon engaged in his capital, Jerusalem? What were their functions?
2. What do you think was symbolized by the two great pillars that stood before the temple? How long did this first temple in fact stand (2K 25:9; 2Ch 36:19)? How many other temples were to replace it before the final destruction of Herod's beautiful temple by the Romans in 70 AD (Ez 3:8-13; 4:24; 5:2; 6:14f Hg 1:1f 14f 2:14; Jn 2:20)? How much does brick and mortar, or even stone, cedar, gold and bronze, figure in God's temporal, let alone his eternal, economy? Was such a magnificent and rich a temple any more adequate than the ancient Mosaic tent of Yahweh's presence as a house for Yahweh, the creator and sustainer of the universe? Why?
3. Do you think that the great temple of Solomon lived up to David's high expectations? Why?
4. What two temples are the most adequate earthly houses of God in this age according to the New Testament (1 Co 3:9-17; 6:19; 2 Co 6:16; Ep 2:19-22; 1 P 2:5)? What makes them adequate? How are they related to each other? What should this mean for all Christians (1 Co 14:12; Ep 4:11f, 16)?
5. Should Christian congregations seek to have beautiful and impressive church buildings? Why? What would really make Christian congregations beautiful and impressive to those who might want to follow the Jesus way to the Father (Jn 13:14f, 34f; 15:9, 12; 17:23,26; 1 Jn 4:7-11, 19f)?

1. Why do you think that the details about the Ark's poles are mentioned at all? What does "to this day" in both Kings and Chronicles (1 K 8:8; 2 Ch 5:9) imply about the dates of the books of Kings and Chronicles? What also does it imply about how long the Ark of the Covenant was present in Solomon's temple, given that the latest other Old Testament reference to the Ark was in Jeremiah's pre-exilic prophecy that the ark would be forgotten, not missed and not remade after Israel's return from the exile (Jr 3:16)?
2. What had been placed in the Ark over the years (Ex 16:33f; 25:16; Nu 17:10; He 9:3-5)? What was still left in the Ark / Box of Yahweh's covenant? How important is it that that in particular was still left (1 K 8:9, 21, 36, 58, 61; 2 Ch 5:10; 6:11,27)? What is at the heart of your Christian covenant box? What has been the history of Yahweh's covenant in your life? What/ Who is enthroned in your own temple's holy of holies (1 Co 6:19f)? How is Yahweh present in you and manifest in your life (Ro 8:9-17; 12:1fGal 2:20; 4:6; 5:16-25; Cl 3:1-17)?
3. What does the chronicler add to the Kings' account of the placing of the Ark of the Covenant in Solomon's temple? What was the theme of their praise (Ps 136 [The Great Praise Psalm])? What are the themes of your praise of Yahweh?
4. What seemed so paradoxical to Solomon about the cloud of Yahweh's glory that drove them out of the Holy Place (1K 8:11f; 2 Ch 5:13-6:1; 7:1f; Ex 40:36; Nu 9:15-17; 14:14; Is 6:1-6)? What do you make of Yahweh's association with clouds (e.g., Ex 19:19; Dn 7:13; Ps 18:11; 97:2; Mt 17:5; 24:30; 26:64; Mk 9:7; 13:26; 14:62; Lk 9:34f; 21:27; Ac 1:9; 1 Th 4:17; Re 1:7)?
5. Can you say what Solomon says in 1 K 8:15 (2 Ch 6:4) about anything in your own life? What are the details of Yahweh's fulfillment of his promises to you (1 K 8:20f; 2 Ch 6:10f)? What does that mean to you right now?

TRAIL IV -- SECTION 38: 1 Kings 8:22-66 & 2 Chronicles 6:12-7:10.

1. What are Solomon's specific requests? On what grounds did he base his prayer (2 Ch 6:14, 42)? What might be your specific requests? On what grounds would you pray for them? Should Christians pray a prayer like this when dedicating a new church building? Why?
2. Why is it important that, like Solomon, we don't mistake where Yahweh's true dwelling place really is (1 K 8:27-30, 49; 2 Ch 6:18-21, 39)? Nevertheless, are specific sites important for worshiping Yahweh (1 K 8:16-18; 2 Ch 6:5f, 38)? Why?
3. Considering who were praying, were the prayers that Solomon wanted answered corporate, individual or both? How open does Solomon want Yahweh to be to the prayers of non-Israelites? What reason does he offer (1 K 8:43; 2 Ch 6:33)? What conditions may apply for Yahweh to answer prayers? Do you take them seriously? Which of these conditions are most relevant to you?
4. How is the Chronicler's account of the dedication service different from that of Kings? How do you account for those differences?
5. What is Solomon's conception of Yahweh throughout his prayer? Do you share Solomon's respect for Yahweh's promises in 1 K 8:56? Why? How much of our Christian hope stands or falls with the faithfulness of God's promises? What better assurances could we ask for (He 6:13f)?
6. Are you as realistic as Solomon was about human sin (1 K 8:46; 2 Ch 6:36)? Are you also as clear about the steps to divine forgiveness? Which of these steps apply to Christians today? How necessary is it that Yahweh himself motivates his people to turn back to walking in his ways? How does he do this (1 K 8:46f, 57f)? What additional empowerment is given to Christians today (Ga 2:20; Ro 8:9f; Ep 3:16-21; Ph 2:12f; He 13:21)?

1. How are God's commandments and promises in Yahweh's reply related to Solomon's supplications? Does their interrelationship really change in the New Testament? How does that relate to individuals being saved/ justified by grace through faith (Jn 14:13-15; 21; 15:7; Ac 15:11; Ga 2:15f; 5:6; Ro 3:21-4:25; 9:30-10:4; 12:1f; Ep 2:8-10; Ja 2:18-26; 1 Jn 3:22f)?
2. What does the Chronicler add to fill out Yahweh's reply to the supplications of Solomon's prayer of dedication of the new temple? How important are these additions? Are some Christians right to see 2 Ch 7:14 as a handy summary of "the secret of the revival of God's people in any age"? Should God's people today, therefore, take very seriously the specific general conditions of corporate renewal given to Solomon? How should we do so?
3. What great building projects did Solomon focus upon for the first half of his reign (1 K 7:1-8; 9:10; 11:42; 2 Ch 8:1)? What else did he build thereafter? Why do you think most of these great accomplishments were passed over so summarily? How important was Solomon's alliance with Hiram of Tyre in all of these infrastructure developments?
4. Whom did Solomon employ as labour in these projects? Who were forced labour [corvee], slaves and overseers (1 K 5:13-18; 9:15,20-23; 2 Ch 8:7-10)? How far did he follow earlier Israelite labour policies (Js 9:21, 27; Ju 1:30; 2 S 12:31; 20:24)? Does 2 Ch 8:8 suggest that this became a permanent policy? But was this really a good long-term strategy for dealing with the alien population that remained within the territory of Israel?
5. What do the repeated references to a daughter of Pharaoh becoming Solomon's wife, indicate about the importance of Egypt in Solomon's international policy (1 K 3:12; 7:8; 9:16f, 24)? How effective was his general policy of making alliances through strategic political marriages in the case of Egypt itself (1 K 11:14-22, 40; 12:2f)? What concerns motivated Solomon to move Pharaoh's daughter's place of residence? Did he continue to bear them in mind later in his reign (1 K 11:1-10)? With what consequences?

TRAIL IV -- SECTION 40: 1 Kings 10:1-29; 2 Chronicles 9:1-29 & 1:14-17.

1. What small alterations does the Chronicler make to the story of Solomon's encounter with the queen of Sheba? What differences of perspective and emphasis are introduced? What details about their relationship that you expected or hoped to discover are missing from the biblical accounts? Why were they omitted? Are there any explicit biblical grounds for the twentieth century Ethiopian claim to have a Solomonic royal dynasty?
2. What seems to have impressed the queen about Solomon and about his court? What sorts of things impress you most about great people? Why? What about you might lead people to praise God or consider your associates blessed of God? How well do you develop and employ the gifts for ministry service that God has given you? Have you ever been able to say something like 1 K 10:6f (2 Ch 9:5f) about anyone? What about Jesus of Nazareth, God's Messiah [Christ]? Why?
3. If Solomon had no need to establish his kingdom by military means as did David, why, then, did he need so many chariots and horsemen (1 K 3:26; 4:26; 10:26, 28f; 2 Ch 1:14-17; 9:25f, 28)? Nevertheless, how might this show of strength have facilitated both his wide empire (1 K 4:21) and also his great commercial success employing and controlling the north-south and east-west trade routes that passed through his kingdom by both land and sea?
4. Use your imagination, how do you picture the riches of Solomon's court and kingdom (1 K 4:22f, 27f; 10:4f, 11f, 14-25, 27; 2 Ch 9:10f, 13-20, 22-24, 26f)? How much did his great wisdom contribute to his becoming so wealthy?
5. How did Solomon use so much gold, silver and other riches? To what extent did Solomon share this great wealth with the common people of Israel (1 K 4:25)? Why? How well do you share your wealth, whatever type or amount it is? What are God's purposes for wealth in the human economy (Lv 25:35f; Pr 14:31; Ac 2:44f; 4:32-37; 2 Co 8:13-15)?

1. What "wise" economic and political concerns might have motivated Solomon to contract so many marriages with foreign, pagan women, in spite of God's dire warnings against such unions (Ex 23:31-33; 34:12-16; Dt 7:3-6; Is 23:12f)? What does 1 K 3:1-4 compared to 1 K 11:7f, suggest about Solomon's attitude to suitable places to worship? Could he justify his apparent apostasy by the strength of his wisdom in a way similar to that of some strong Christians in 1<sup>st</sup> century Corinth (1 Co 10:19)? What does Paul have to say about such a casual approach to idolatry in 1 Co 10:19ff)? How well did Solomon's strength take into account the weakness of his peoples' faith? What were the consequences of his approach for himself and the nation (1 K 11:9-12)? Is idolatry still a problem in the church today? How so?
2. What are your weaknesses? How are they related to your strengths? How does this relationship affect individuals, families and nations (1 Co 10:6-12)? How dangerous can sexual love become even for the wisest of people? Can you think of other examples of this? What are Paul's suggestions for coping with the spiritual dangers of sexual relationships (1 Co 7:8f, 28, 32-35)?
3. How could someone as wise as Solomon knowingly sin (1 K 11:9f)? How can you? Is sin just a natural consequence of ignorance, as Socrates is reported to have taught (Mt 26:41; Mk 14:38; Ro 7:21-25; 8:3)? What makes morally positive living possible for Christians (Ro 6 & 8; 12:1f; Cl 2&3; Ep 5:21-20; 1 Co 1:13)? Is it possible for non-Christians (Ro 2:14ff)? How so (1 Jn 2:29; 4:7ff)?
4. What can we learn about Yahweh's character and ways of working from: (a) his response to Solomon's sins, (b) his keeping covenant with David in spite of sin, (c) his employment of political opportunists to cut into Solomon's great trade route profits (11:14-24) and (d) his use of a major change in the Egyptian royal dynasty to provide support for future opposition to Solomon's dynasty (11:26-40)?
5. How does Yahweh's covenant promise through the prophet Ahijah to Jeroboam, the future king of Israel [the ten tribes of the northern kingdom] (1 K 11:38), compare to the second one made to Solomon (1 K 9:4f)? In what respects was it subject to the same conditions (1 K 11:38) as Yahweh's earlier dynastic promises to David (2 S 7:11-16) and Solomon (1 K 2:3; 1 Ch 22:12f)? What were Solomon's two responses to Ahijah's prophecy? How might he also be remembering his previous recognition of Jeroboam's great leadership potential (1 K 11:26-28, 40)?
6. Why do you think that the Chronicler omitted all of these unseemly aspects of Solomon's life and reign, when he had access not only to the account of Kings but also to those of the contemporary prophets (2 Ch 9:29; 1 K 11:41)?

1. As you skim read through the longest genealogical section in the Bible [recorded sometime after the exile of Judah in 587/586 BC (1 Ch 9:1)], what names do you recognize from your studies so far? How do their particular places in these genealogies help to locate these individuals within their larger family contexts? What is the significance of the hundreds of other people named individually only here? Why are individuals treated as just as important as peoples, families and nations in the spiritual history of God's people? What value do you think these genealogies had for the Jews themselves, especially those trying to rebuild Judah after the exile? Why were Jesus' ancestors important enough to merit two genealogies in the New Testament (Mt 1 & Lk 3)? How important are your own genealogies to you?
2. Do some of the names seem familiar, but somewhat out of place (e.g., "Saul" [Hebrew = "asked"] in 1:48f & "Miriam" in 4:17)? Why might that only seem so? How many names are repeated in a particular family tree? How true is this in your family? Why?
3. Besides the bare father-son connections of typical genealogies, what can you find of interest in the occasional inclusion of foreigners, irregularities in family relationships, alternate names, a variety of women, professions, place names, even occasional brief cameo narratives for individuals and groups? How does this additional information enrich the genealogies for you? How also does it help you fit the genealogies into the historical narrative you've been following? What do you make of the various dating links (4:31,41; 5:6, 10, 17, 22, 26; 6:10, 15, 31f; 7:2)?
4. How do parts of the genealogies here compare in details with some of the more limited genealogies you have encountered embedded in the history thus far (e.g., David's family in 1 Ch 3:1-9; 14:4-7; 2 S 2:11; 3:2-5; 5:4f, 14-16; 12:24f)? How far is David's line traced historically? What about the succession of high priests? What light does this throw upon the primary interests of the Chronicler and the possible dating of his whole historical account? What are the greatest omissions that you noticed? What might these also indicate about the interests of the Chronicler?
5. What might be said about you in a brief individual vignette inserted in your family's subsequent genealogy? For what would you most like to be remembered? What do you think God would want remembered most about you? Why? How might this motivate and inform your present and future life with and for Yahweh?

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**Review your notes and answer the comprehensive question for Trail IV**