

Homiletics Analysis: 1 Chronicles 28

Content & Intent

This Text — Content

First Chronicles 28 records David's final public address to the assembled leaders of Israel, delivered in the context of his inability to build the temple and his formal commissioning of Solomon as both king and temple-builder. The chapter moves through three distinct movements: David's public declaration to the assembly explaining why he cannot build and why Solomon has been divinely chosen (vv. 1–8); David's private charge to Solomon, the most intimate and theologically dense section, in which David urges Solomon to know God, serve Him wholeheartedly, and seek Him (vv. 9–10); and the formal transfer of the temple plans and materials, described in terms that deliberately echo Moses handing the tabernacle blueprints to Bezalel — plans given not by David's architectural imagination but by the Spirit of God (vv. 11–21). The chapter culminates in David's great charge: "Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the LORD God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is completed" (v. 20).

This Text — Intent

God is using this passage to press a fundamental question upon every reader: *Will you take up the work God has assigned you, trusting His sufficiency rather than your own?* The chapter is not primarily about Solomon, or the temple, or even the succession of the Davidic covenant — it is a sustained argument that faithfulness to a God-given task is possible because God Himself is the guarantor of its completion. The intent is to displace self-reliance and fear as the motivating conditions of obedience, replacing them with grounded confidence in divine presence and provision. David's charge to Solomon is the vehicle; the reader is the target.

Subject Sentence: David charges Solomon to build God's house, trusting divine presence over personal adequacy.

Primary Claim: God calls His servants to take up divinely assigned tasks not because they are sufficient but because He is — and the proper response to that call is courageous, wholehearted obedience grounded in His promise never to leave.

Interpretive Evaluation

The Temple Plans and the Spirit of God (vv. 11–19)

The most theologically charged interpretive question in this chapter concerns the nature of the plans David gives Solomon. Verse 19 states, “All this he made clear to me in writing from the hand of the LORD, all the work to be done according to the plan.” The parallel language to Moses and the tabernacle is unmistakable — as Exodus 25:9 specifies that Moses was to build the tabernacle “according to the pattern” shown him on the mountain, so here the temple plans are divinely revealed, not humanly devised. Several traditions read this as primarily a theological flourish honoring David — acknowledging that his deep devotion gave him unusual wisdom in cultic matters.

The Reformed reading presses harder: the Chronicler is making a claim about divine authorship. The temple is not David’s project; it is God’s. The detailed enumeration of rooms, furnishings, weights of gold and silver (vv. 14–18) — all of it is framed as received rather than invented. This is not incidental. It establishes that Solomon’s task is *execution*, not *design* — which has direct bearing on the charge to “be strong and courageous” in verse 20. Solomon is not being asked to innovate; he is being asked to be faithful to a plan already fully specified by God. The Reformed reading is to be preferred because it alone accounts for the deliberate Mosaic typology the Chronicler is deploying and for the structural function of the plans section as the *basis* for the courage charge, not merely its background.

“Know the God of your father” (v. 9) — Relational vs. Propositional Knowledge

Some charismatic and Wesleyan readings emphasize verse 9 as a call to experiential, affective knowledge of God — knowing God “in your heart” as opposed to merely knowing facts about Him. This reading captures something real: the Hebrew *yādaʿ* (know) carries relational and experiential freight that bare intellectual knowledge does not. The charge to serve God with “a whole heart and a willing mind” reinforces that this is not merely creedal orthodoxy David is after.

The Reformed reading does not deny the experiential dimension but frames it differently: David is calling Solomon to covenantal knowledge — knowing God as the God who has acted, who has made promises, who has chosen, and who searches hearts and understands intentions. The Reformed tradition’s insistence that right affection flows from right understanding of who God is keeps this verse from devolving into a purely emotive spirituality disconnected from the revealed character of God. Acknowledge the Wesleyan instinct to keep the relational dimension of this call foregrounded — it corrects a purely intellectual reading. But qualify it by insisting that the relational knowledge David calls for is saturated with the specific content of who this God is.

The Condition in Verse 9b — “If you forsake him, he will cast you off forever”

This clause generates real interpretive divergence. Arminian and Wesleyan readers cite it as evidence that election and relationship with God are genuinely conditioned on human faithfulness — that God’s promises are not unconditional, and that covenant apostasy results in real and final rejection. Dispensational readers sometimes take it as applying uniquely to Israel’s theocratic covenant with its temporal blessings and curses, not as a template for the believer’s standing before God in the new covenant.

The Reformed reading handles this carefully. The conditional warning is real — it does not operate as mere rhetorical decoration — but it must be read in covenantal context. The Chronicler is writing to post-exilic Israel, for whom the reality of national covenant judgment (the exile) was a living memory. The warning to Solomon is also a warning to them: unfaithfulness to God’s covenant purposes has consequences. This does not establish that any individual believer can forfeit union with Christ under the new covenant, because the conditions of the new covenant differ materially from the old — the Spirit now secures the obedience that the old covenant demanded. What the verse does establish is that God is not a passive guarantor of human spiritual laziness. Covenantal relationship is a living, responsive reality, and the call to wholehearted seeking is serious, not optional.

Key Canonical Support

- **Exodus 25:8–9, 40** — God commands Moses to build the tabernacle “according to the pattern shown you on the mountain,” establishing the paradigm of divinely specified sacred architecture that 1 Chronicles 28 explicitly echoes; the temple plans are received, not invented.
- **Deuteronomy 31:6–8** — Moses charges Joshua with nearly identical language — “be strong and courageous, do not fear or be in dread... for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you” — establishing the Mosaic pattern of divine-presence-as-courage-ground that David now repeats to Solomon; the reader is meant to hear this echo.
- **Joshua 1:5–9** — God repeats the Deuteronomy 31 charge to Joshua directly, reinforcing that this is not merely a Mosaic idiom but a covenantal formula — divine presence as the sufficient basis for obedient execution of a God-given task; Solomon/David stands in a long succession of such commissionings.
- **Hebrews 13:5–6** — The New Testament quotes “I will never leave you nor forsake you” as a present reality for believers, grounding the New Testament call to contentment and freedom from fear in the same covenantal promise David invokes here; the Primary Claim of 1 Chronicles 28 finds its fullest expression in the permanent presence of Christ through the Spirit.
- **John 2:19–21** — Jesus declares Himself the true temple — the place where God and man meet — giving the entire temple-building project of 1 Chronicles 28 its ultimate

typological referent; every careful study of this chapter should be oriented toward the one who both builds the house and *is* the house.

Aim: To establish, from David's charge to Solomon, that God's call to a task is itself the sufficient basis for courageous, wholehearted engagement — and to press the reader toward that obedience.

Content Table

Verse(s)	Content	Notes
1	David assembles all Israel's leaders — officials, commanders, administrators, mighty men	The breadth of the assembly underscores the public, covenantal nature of what follows
2	David addresses the assembly: "I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark"	"House of rest" — significant phrase; temple as fulfillment of Israel's journey to rest
3	God refused David: "You are a man of war and have shed blood"	Relays divine prohibition; David does not resist or contest it — models submission
4	David recounts God's sovereign choice — of Judah, of his family, of him personally	Sovereign election emphasized three times in descending particularity
5	God chose Solomon from among David's sons to sit on the throne of the LORD's kingdom	"Throne of the LORD's kingdom" — Israel's king is vice-regent, not ultimate king
6	God's direct word: "It is Solomon your son who shall build my house and my courts"	David quotes divine decree — this gives Solomon's commission divine, not merely paternal, authority
7	Conditionality: God will establish Solomon's kingdom if he keeps the commandments	Covenant structure: promise + condition
8	Public charge to the	The assembly is not passive

Verse(s)	Content	Notes
	assembly: keep and seek all the commandments before God's eyes	spectators — they share in the covenant obligation
9	Private charge to Solomon: "Know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and willing mind"	The most concentrated spiritual exhortation in the chapter; three dimensions: know, serve, seek
9b	"If you seek him, he will be found by you; if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever"	Double-sided covenant promise; both the invitation and the warning are real
10	"Be careful, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and do it."	First iteration of the courage charge; grounded in divine choice, not Solomon's ability
11–12	David gives Solomon the plans: vestibule, buildings, treasuries, upper rooms, inner rooms, atonement cover	The specificity is deliberate — these are received plans, not architectural imagination
13	Plans for the priestly divisions and Levitical divisions, and for all the work of service	Temple operations, not just structure — the whole liturgical system is divinely specified
14–18	Weights of gold and silver for all furnishings: lampstands, tables, forks, basins, cups, incense altar, cherubim	Extreme specificity echoing Exodus's tabernacle specifications; sacred detail = divine authorship
19	"All this he made clear to me in writing from the hand of the LORD, all the work to be done"	Explicit claim of divine dictation/revelation; the plans are God's, not David's
20	"Be strong and courageous and do it... the LORD God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you"	The climactic charge; the basis for courage is divine presence, explicitly stated
21	Priests, Levites, and skilled workers are ready; leaders	Human resources are sufficient and assembled —

Verse(s)	Content	Notes
	and people will obey Solomon fully	God's provision is comprehensive, not just spiritual

Divisions Table

Division	Verses	Label
1	1–8	The Public Declaration: Why Solomon, Not David
2	9–10	The Private Charge: Know God, Serve Wholeheartedly, Be Courageous
3	11–19	The Transfer of Plans: God's Design, Not David's
4	20–21	The Final Commission: Divine Presence as the Sufficient Ground

Subject Sentence & Primary Claim (*restated*)

Subject Sentence: David charges Solomon to build God's house, trusting divine presence over personal adequacy.

Primary Claim: God calls His servants to take up divinely assigned tasks not because they are sufficient but because He is — and the proper response to that call is courageous, wholehearted obedience grounded in His promise never to leave.

Applications (Five)

1. (*Mind/Belief*) Locate your calling before you assess your competence. David does not charge Solomon by reviewing Solomon's qualifications. He charges Solomon by reviewing God's sovereign choice (vv. 4–6) — God chose Judah, chose David's family, chose Solomon. The order matters: divine calling establishes the task; human competence follows as stewardship, not as precondition. If you spend the first movement of every God-given assignment cataloguing your inadequacies, you have misread the ground on which your calling stands. The question is not "Am I sufficient for this?" — it is "Has God assigned this to me?" If the answer to the second question is yes, then the first question has already been answered by the one who assigned it.

2. (*Affections/Worship*) Pursue the God behind the task, not merely the completion of the task. David's most urgent word to Solomon is not "build the temple" but "know the God of your father, serve him with a whole heart and a willing mind" (v. 9). The temple is the assignment; God is the relationship. It is entirely possible to execute a God-given task with technical precision and withered affection — to build the house without knowing the One who commissioned it. Solomon's eventual failure (1 Kings 11) will not be architectural incompetence but a divided heart. Tend the interior before you labor at the exterior. Let your assigned work flow from your worship rather than substituting for it.

3. (*Will/Behavior*) Receive the plans as received — and then execute them faithfully, without improvisation. The temple plans come to Solomon already fully specified — dimensions, furnishings, weights, priestly divisions (vv. 11–19) — and verse 19 makes clear these are "from the hand of the LORD." Solomon's role is executor, not architect. There is a discipline here for every person entrusted with a God-given task: the temptation to "improve" on what God has specified — to make it more contemporary, more manageable, more aligned with personal preference — is not an upgrade. It is a departure. Identify where God has already specified the what and the how of your calling, and bring your energy to the execution, not the redesign.

4. (*Mind/Belief*) Let divine presence reframe what counts as adequate preparation. Verse 21 lists the human resources assembled for Solomon: skilled craftsmen, Levites, priests, willing leaders, an obedient people. God's provision is comprehensively practical — not merely a spiritual atmosphere but real people with real skills in real place. But these resources appear *after* the courage charge of verse 20, not before it. Solomon is not commissioned because the resources are in place; the resources are shown to be in place as evidence of God's comprehensive provision. Change the order in which you look for confirmation, and you change your whole posture toward the task. Ask first: Has God called me? Then look for His provision — which will be there, though you may not have catalogued it yet.

****5. (*Affections/Worship*)** Receive the "I will not leave you or forsake you" promise as a present reality, not a future hope.* The covenantal formula of verse 20 — "He will not leave you or forsake you" — is not given to Solomon as a retrospective consolation ("He was with you all along") or a future guarantee ("He will be with you when things get hard"). It is given before the work begins, as the ground on which the work begins. The same promise quoted in Hebrews 13:5 is given to every believer right now, in this present moment, as the reason for present contentment and present courage. You are not waiting for God to show up when things become difficult enough to require His presence. He is with you now. That is not sentiment. That is the covenantal ground of your obedience.

Theological Importance

Theological Importance: This chapter teaches that God's calling both precedes and sustains human obedience — that the sufficient ground of any God-assigned task is never

the servant's competence but always the God who assigns it. The Chronicler's careful insistence that the temple plans were revealed ("from the hand of the LORD," v. 19) makes explicit what the entire passage implies: this is God's project, not David's or Solomon's. The passage also teaches that covenant relationship with God — knowing, serving, and seeking Him with an undivided heart (v. 9) — is not a precondition that qualifies a person for God's calling but the ongoing orientation that sustains faithful execution of it. Finally, the passage teaches that God's promise of presence is comprehensive: it covers not only the spiritual interior but the practical exterior, not only courage but competent workers (v. 21), not only the call but the resources required to answer it.

Reformed Theological Significance

Reformed Theological Significance: This passage is a sustained display of sovereign grace as the foundation for covenant obedience — the precise structure the Reformed tradition identifies as the heartbeat of biblical religion. God chooses (vv. 4–6), God assigns the task (v. 6), God provides the plans (v. 19), God promises His presence (v. 20), God assembles the resources (v. 21): the human response of courage and wholehearted obedience is from first to last a response to divine initiative, not a condition that secures divine favor. The Reformed tradition's insistence that grace precedes and enables obedience — that indicative precedes imperative — is embedded in this chapter's structure. Furthermore, the temple typology that saturates the passage points Reformed readers toward Christ, the true temple (John 2:19–21), in whom the dwelling of God with man is not a building but a Person, and in whom the "house of rest" David longed to build is finally and permanently established. The Chronicler's post-exilic audience needed to know that the failure of Solomon's temple did not mean the failure of God's project — and the Reformed reader, standing on this side of the incarnation, knows why: because the project was always pointing beyond stone and cedar.

Main Takeaway

God does not commission you because you are ready; He commissions you because He has chosen, He has planned, He has provided, and He will be with you until the work is done. Stop auditing your adequacy and start trusting His presence. The courage David calls Solomon to is not manufactured — it is received. Receive it.

Preaching/Teaching Pitfalls

- **Preaching this as a leadership or succession text rather than a theology-of-calling text.** The surface structure of 1 Chronicles 28 — a king handing off responsibility to his heir — invites application to organizational leadership,

succession planning, and mentoring. These applications are not wrong, but they are shallow. The Chronicler is not writing a leadership handbook; he is making a theological claim about the God who calls, plans, provides, and promises presence. Preachers who stay at the leadership-succession level will produce an accurate but thin exposition that misses what the Chronicler most urgently wants the reader to know.

- **Treating verse 9 as a standalone devotional verse without its double-sided structure.** “Know the God of your father” and “seek him and he will be found by you” are frequently quoted without the second half: “but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.” The warning is real, and omitting it produces a sentimentalized reading of covenantal relationship — as though seeking God is optional and the relationship continues regardless. For the Chronicler’s post-exilic audience, this was not an abstract theological possibility; it was recent history. The fullness of verse 9 must be preached.
- **Missing the Mosaic typology in the plans section (vv. 11–19) and therefore preaching it as mere administrative detail.** The extended catalogue of temple furnishings and weights of gold and silver is not a budget report — it is a deliberate echo of Exodus 25–28, designed to establish that the temple is as divinely authored as the tabernacle. Preachers who skip or skim this section miss its load-bearing function: verse 19’s claim that these plans come “from the hand of the LORD” is only intelligible against the pattern established by the Mosaic typology. The plans section is the exegetical basis for the courage charge of verse 20.
- **Preaching the courage charge (v. 20) without its grounding.** “Be strong and courageous and do it” is a call to action, but it is not a motivational slogan. Its ground is explicit: “for the LORD God, even my God, is with you.” Preaching the imperative without the indicative reduces the passage to moralism — “try harder, be braver” — and severs the application from its theological root. Every exhortation in this passage is grounded in a prior divine action. Preach the ground before the charge.
- **Failing to trace the temple typology to Christ.** A full exposition of 1 Chronicles 28 that does not arrive at John 2:19–21 or Hebrews 13:5 has not finished the passage’s canonical argument. The temple Solomon is commissioned to build is a provisional installation pointing toward the permanent dwelling of God with humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. Post-exilic Israel needed to know that God’s house-building project did not end with the exile; the New Testament reader knows it did not end with Solomon either. The preacher who stops at Solomon leaves the congregation at a way-station, not the destination.
- **Applying the conditional warning of verse 7 and verse 9b as a direct template for the believer’s standing before God under the new covenant.** The conditional structure — “if you are careful... I will establish his kingdom forever; if you forsake

him, he will cast you off” — is real covenant language addressing Solomon’s specific theocratic role and, through him, the Chronicler’s post-exilic community. New covenant believers are not in the same covenantal position: the Spirit now secures the obedience that the old covenant demanded, and “no condemnation” (Romans 8:1) is not a conditional achievement. Preaching verse 9b as a direct statement of how a believer loses or maintains their standing before God conflates covenantal epochs in ways the passage does not authorize. The warning’s force is real — God is not indifferent to unfaithfulness — but its structure must be interpreted within its covenant-historical context, not imported wholesale into new covenant soteriology.