

Tuesday, September 1, 2020—2 Chronicles 4-6

The Temple was the dwelling place of God. To be sure, Solomon knew the Temple could not contain Him (6:18), but they wanted a permanent place like the Tabernacle in the wilderness where they could come before Him to worship and to commune with Him and one another. Within and without the Temple were all kinds of symbolic pieces.

One was the Bronze Sea, a massive bowl filled with water. It was about 18 feet in diameter and sat about 8 feet above the ground. This was for the priests to cleanse themselves ceremonially before making sacrifice. To the north and the south of the Sea were five much smaller bowls for cleansing the sacrifice. God was reminding them every day that even the priests needed far more cleansing than the sacrifice itself (4:1-7).

Much of the furniture was covered in gold, but many of the pieces that the priests used daily for sacrifice and offering were covered in bronze. The constant use and important work called for an alloy—a mixture of metals. Even in the metal, God was pointing to Jesus—the one who was God and man—who would be the One to atone for our sin.

Once the Temple was complete, God filled the Temple with His powerful presence (5:11-14). When Solomon dedicated the Temple, he declared to God and the people that this would be a place where God's people would come for justice, rescue, forgiveness, and restoration (6:1-32).

Praise God for making our souls His temple through the work of Jesus the Anointed One. Pray to be a worthy dwelling place.

Monday, August 31, 2020—2 Chronicles 1-3

When beginning a new job or moving into a new house, there are lots of things to consider. "To do" lists, wish lists, and shopping lists are numerous, and the tasks seems endless. Starting is exciting and exhausting.

The exiles were returning home, and they had much to consider about reestablishing themselves. The opening chapters of 2 Chronicles reminded them of how Solomon began his reign. When God told Solomon to ask for whatever he

wanted, Solomon asked for wisdom and knowledge to lead the people (1:10). God was pleased with Solomon's request and promised to give him wisdom along with wealth, riches, and honor. Asking for wisdom is no guarantee of gaining the other things, but asking for wisdom is the best request of anyone wanting to lead well.

Solomon then set out to build the Temple his father had wanted to build. Solomon knew the building could not contain Yahweh since the heavens themselves could not (2:6), but he wanted a place to burn incense and bring honor to Yahweh. He sought lumber and a builder from neighboring Lebanon so the Temple would be magnificent. The building was made of wood overlaid with gold and adorned with jewels (3:1-17), a palace fitting for the King of kings and Lord of lords.

God calls each believer to a new adventure each day—a journey of knowing Him and making Him known. Some days will be fuller than others. Some days, harder. Each day calls for wisdom. Pray for it.

Sunday, August 30, 2020—1 Chronicles 27-29

The kingdom of God is in opposition to the kingdoms of the world. For every generation of believers, there has been the need to live with complete faithfulness to God while determining how to live peaceably with the governing authorities God has allowed in the world. There is always some level of tension when God overrules the state.

For those returning from exile, this meant assembling an army (27:1-15) to protect the people and the places God had given against the attacks of outsiders. The Chronicler reminded the people of the wrath of God that came against David when he took a census (27:23-24). The people were always to trust in God and not in the number of their troops.

As the people reassembled and rebuilt, they needed to remember David's charge to the people and to Solomon when he foresaw the Temple and its importance. "Acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. IF you seek him, he will be

found by you, but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever” (28:9). The best organization, the strongest army, and the grandest Temple would be of no value if each person were not pursuing God.

Many stepped forward to give personally to the work God was doing (29:1-9). Pray that you, too, will pursue God and give sacrificially for His glory. Agree that everything comes from Him and is for Him (29:16).

Saturday, August 29, 2020—1 Chronicles 24-26

Some people keep tradition alive though the faith is dead. They go through the motions simply because others before them did. Others, however, keep tradition because those who have died passed along a living faith which the tradition celebrates and propagates.

As the exiles returned to Israel, they needed to remember the successes and the failures of their ancestors in order to worship Yahweh, experience His blessings, and avoid disaster. God was calling them to a living faith built on important tradition. Knowing the role of the tribe of Levi in leading the people in worship was vital to restoring worship and national spiritual health. The entire tribe was responsible so they could share the load and not expect one person to do the work (24:1-31).

Some would lead in the sacrifices for sin and thanksgiving. Some would provide the manual labor around the Temple. Others would play music and prophesy—thanking and praising the Lord and exalting Him for His goodness and faithfulness (25:1-5). Another group was responsible for security—guarding the gates and maintaining the sacredness of the Temple complex. God was specific about the holiness of those who approached Him (26:1-19). A final group oversaw the finances and the treasury, knowing the value of all that was brought to God as an offering.

God has a role for every believer in the church. No one is responsible for everything, but each one is responsible for his or her gifting to build up the body. Pray for an awareness of your gifting and daily faithfulness to use it.

Friday, August 28, 2020—1 Chronicles 20-23

God makes each person in His image with the potential of knowing Him and fulfilling his or her God-given design. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life corrupt the design and complicate the relationship. Everyone sins. Everyone needs His grace.

That list includes King David. Despite his success, he was flawed. “In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war” (20:1), David did not go to war. His commander, Joab, led the army to victory. David received the crown and the accolades, but he had stayed home and sinned with Bathsheba. He was successful with his military but not his morality.

The spiritual enemy, Satan, took the opportunity to tempt David to take a census of Israel. David could use the numbers to give him more confidence in the number of his troops than the strength of his God. Joab urged David not to conduct the count (21:3), but David pushed ahead. After the count was complete, David was overcome with guilt (21:8). He fell on the mercy of God to endure the consequences of his sin. In repentance and worship, David bought a field and made a sacrificial offering, designating that place to be the new site of the Tabernacle (22:1).

David began preparations for Solomon’s construction of the Temple and blessed Solomon, praying for his wisdom and discretion (22:12-13). God was able to take what Satan meant for evil and turn it into something good. His grace is sufficient and made perfect in weakness.

Thursday, August 27, 2020—1 Chronicles 17-19

Every good idea may not be a God idea. David had a heart for God and the things of God, and he realized, while sitting in his cedar-walled palace, that the presence of God remained in a tent. He wanted to do something about that. Building a temple for God was a good idea.

Nathan, the prophet, agreed because he had seen how God was with David and blessing him. God, however, did not agree. God had never asked any of His leaders to move Him out of the Tent of Meeting. God was more focused on building a “house” for David, a name greater than any that would last forever. God

said David's son would build a house for Yahweh. David responded with a prayer of praise and humility (17:16-27).

As king, David won victory everywhere he went (18:6), and he dedicated all the bounty to Yahweh. (Some of these treasures became fixtures in the Temple Solomon built.) He was intent on bringing glory to God, and he remained humble as he found repeated success.

David's army was also focused on God's glory. Ammon rebuffed an expression of sympathy from King David and gathered the Arameans to fight with them. David's army leaders agreed to be strong and fight bravely, knowing Yahweh would do what was good in his sight (19:13).

Thank God for giving the blessing of knowing Him and serving Him. Pray for wisdom to do what is good and right in His sight.

Wednesday, August 26, 2020—1 Chronicles 14-16

God's blessings take different forms. His presence with His people is the greatest of all blessings, but He is gracious to provide a number of other gifts to encourage His people and bring recognition to Himself. For David, God's blessings were myriad.

David was only the second king of Israel, so he experienced many "firsts" as the king. He captured Jerusalem, so he was the first to reign from there. God blessed David with favor from the neighboring country's King Hiram, David's family grew, and David was victorious over the Philistines. David knew Yahweh had established and exalted him (14:2).

David was not only prospering in the areas visible to man; he was also growing spiritually. After establishing his rule, he knew he needed to make a place for the Ark of the Covenant and the presence of God in the capital city. He pitched a tent for the Ark and made clear only the Levites were to carry the Ark (15:2). This was God's instruction (15:15) which David had neglected, resulting in Uzzah's death. David was learning the value of prayer and knowing and doing God's word.

David was so pleased with the blessing of God and the arrival of the Ark that he danced and celebrated. His wife, Michal, despised him (15:29), but David

was more focused on pleasing God than people. His reputation was of less concern than His worship. He penned a psalm of thanksgiving to Yahweh for His unparalleled goodness (16:7-36).

Pray for leaders who prioritize worship over worldly success.