



## Second Chronicles - Chapter Five

- II 1 Chronicles 10:1-2 Chronicles 9:31 - The United Kingdom of David and Solomon (continues)
- II.g 2 Chronicles 3:1-5:1 - Solomon's Building of the Temple (continues/concludes)
- II.g.ii 2 Chronicles 4:1-5:1 - Furnishings of the Temple (continues/concludes)

### Summary of Chapter Five

Solomon gathered all the leaders of the nation for the ceremony to bring the Ark of the Covenant into the temple, where it was placed in the Most Holy Place. There were uncounted numbers of animals sacrificed to God with all the priests and Levites in attendance, leading the ceremony of worship to God. Then the presence of the Lord filled the temple so that the priests could not longer minister there.

<sup>1</sup> Thus all the work that Solomon did for the house of the Lord was finished. Solomon brought in the things that his father David had dedicated, and stored the silver, the gold, and all the vessels in the treasuries of the house of God.

### 2 Chronicles 5:1

Thus all the work that Solomon did for the house of the Lord was finished is a summary statement, again recalling that the temple was the joint enterprise of Solomon and David; refer to 1 Chronicles 17:8 and 22:2-16. This was the great achievement of Solomon's life. He began this ambitious project shortly after he came to the throne, and now it was finished, certainly much to his satisfaction.

Solomon brought in the things that his father David had dedicated. This is a reminder of just how much David did for the temple. He even designed, made, and dedicated some the furnishings of the temple.

## II.h 2 Chronicles 5:2-7:22 - The Dedication of the Temple

The Chronicler's account of the dedication of the temple is notably longer than his description of the building work with 77 verses compared to 40, since he is more concerned with the meaning of the temple than with its physical structure. This interest is conveyed through the two theophanies in v.14 and 2 Chronicles 7:1-3, Solomon's great prayer of dedication in 2 Chronicles 6:14-42, and God's message to Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:12-22.

### II.h.i 2 Chronicles 5:2-14 - The Ark Brought into the Temple

Refer to the chapter summary above.

<sup>2</sup> Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the ancestral houses of the people of Israel, in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion. <sup>3</sup> And all the Israelites assembled before the king at the festival that is in the seventh month.

### 2 Chronicles 5:2-3

Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes. Just as David had summoned all the leaders of Israel to retrieve the ark from Kiriath-jearim, recorded in 1 Chronicles Chapters 13 and 15, Solomon also assembled them for the ark's final journey from its tent in the city of David; refer to 1 Chronicles 16:1 for David's temporary tent for the ark. The official installation of the Ark of the Covenant into the temple was an extremely important occasion. Solomon wanted representatives of the entire kingdom to have a part in this memorable event.

The festival that is in the seventh month is the Festival of Booths; refer to Leviticus 23:33-43. The temple was completed in the eighth month of Solomon's eleventh year, i.e. 959 BC, and the dedication took place eleven months later. The Israelites had been instructed to live in temporary shelters during this festival, to commemorate the exodus. It was observed annually in the seventh month of the Jewish calendar, i.e. Ethanim (Preexile) or Tishri (Postexile), which equates approximately to mid-September to mid-October in the Gregorian calendar.

<sup>4</sup> And all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites carried the ark. <sup>5</sup> So they brought up the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the priests and the Levites brought them up.

## 2 Chronicles 5:4-5

Moses' tent of meeting and its holy vessels were brought up from Gibeon to join the ark. Similarly, the Levitical priests Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun (v.12) were united for this ceremony. Henceforth, all of Israel's worship would be focused on the Jerusalem temple. Refer to 1 Chronicles 16:37-42, which describes how the ministry had been split between the altar at the tabernacle in Gibeon and the ark in Jerusalem.

The priests and the Levites brought them up. This properly respected the pattern designated by the Mosaic Law. Solomon wanted representatives of the entire kingdom to witness the event, but not at the expense of disobedience to God's command.

<sup>6</sup> King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be numbered or counted. <sup>7</sup> Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. <sup>8</sup> For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim made a covering above the ark and its poles. <sup>9</sup> The poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside; they are there to this day. <sup>10</sup> There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the people of Israel after they came out of Egypt.

## 2 Chronicles 5:6-10

Sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be numbered or counted. Some commentators believe Solomon went 'over-the-top' in his effort to honour and praise God on this great day. However, this is a purely human perspective because no human effort can ever be fully sufficient to acknowledge such an awesome God.

Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place. The priests completed the transfer of the ark, since only they could enter the most holy place. The temple could not be considered open until the Ark of the Covenant was set in the most holy place. The ark was the most important item in the entire temple for it represented the presence of God - the primary purpose for having a temple in the first place.

Underneath the wings of the cherubim. The interior of the temple was richly decorated with the designs of cherubim, which surround the throne of God in heaven. This design of the temple was after the pattern of the tabernacle, which had woven designs of cherubim on the inner covering.

They are there to this day is most likely a comment from an early author, whose work was used by the author of Kings and the Chronicler. The ark was apparently destroyed along with the first temple and was never replaced.

There is a tradition that Jeremiah took the ark from the temple and hid it just before the Babylonians took the city. However, there is no indication of this in Scripture and the ark was never again recorded in human history. There is an indication that the Lord has taken it to himself: <<*Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail*>> (Revelation 11:19).

The ark had once contained the gold jar of manna and Aaron's rod: <<*In it stood the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which there were a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant*>> (Hebrews 9:4); refer also to Exodus 16:32-34 and Numbers 17:10-11. Now held only the two tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments.

Where the Lord made a covenant with the people of Israel after they came out of Egypt. The reminder of the deliverance from Egypt is significant, because there is a sense in which this - some 500 years after the Exodus - is the culmination of the deliverance from Egypt. Out of Egypt and into the wilderness Israel, out of necessity, lived in tents and the dwelling of God was a tent. Now, since Solomon had built the temple, the dwelling of God among Israel was a building, a place of permanence and security.

<sup>11</sup> Now when the priests came out of the holy place (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without regard to their divisions), <sup>12</sup> all the levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kindred, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with one hundred and twenty priests who were trumpeters, <sup>13</sup> it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the Lord,

‘For he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures for ever’,

the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, <sup>14</sup> so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

### 2 Chronicles 5:11-14

For all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without regard to their divisions. Normally the priests and Levites worked at the temple according to a strict schedule. Yet on this day, all the priests and Levites were on duty before the Lord. This was both to manage the vast quantities of animals to be sacrificed and also to ensure they all had an opportunity to serve on such a momentous occasion.

All the levitical singers. It was right that on this day praise be focused to the Lord, and not to Solomon or David. In reality, this was the Lord's house, not David's or Solomon's.

The Chronicler inserts a lengthy sentence (vv.11b-13) into his source of 1 Kings 8:10 to describe a highly festive scene, suggesting that the cloud of God's glory that filled the temple came in response to the Levites' and priests' worship. The Chronicler's own generation should draw a similar lesson, that God will surely be present when his people offer praise and thanksgiving. The appearance of the cloud and the inability of the priests even to stand to minister in God's presence signified that God in his majesty was taking up residence in his temple. There is an evident parallel here, and in 2 Chronicles 7:3, with the appearance of the glory cloud in the tabernacle and over the tent of meeting in Exodus 40:34-35. The visible manifestation of God's glory and presence was known in later Judaism as the *Shekinah*, and it provides the background to John's comment about the incarnate Son: <<*And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth*>> (John 1:14). The praise of v.13b appears again in 2 Chronicles 20:21b.

The extreme presence of the glory of God made normal service impossible. The sense of the presence of God was so intense that the priests felt it was impossible to continue in the building. As soon as the temple is opened for business, all the carefully planned ceremonies and services have to be suspended because God takes over the entire building for himself. The temple is to be for God's glory, not for that of human beings.

It is hard to define the glory of God; it could be called the radiant outshining of his character and presence. Here, it is manifested in a cloud:

- This is the cloud that stood by Israel in the wilderness; refer to Exodus 13:21-22.

- This is the cloud of glory that God spoke to Israel from; refer to Exodus 16:10.
- This is the cloud from which God met with Moses and others; refer to Exodus 19:9 and 24:15-18, Numbers 11:25, 12:5 and 16:42.
- This is the cloud that stood by the door of the Tabernacle; refer to Exodus 33:9-10.
- This is the cloud from which God appeared to the High Priest in the Holy Place inside the veil; refer to Leviticus 16:2.
- This is the cloud of Ezekiel's vision, filling the temple of God with the brightness of his glory; refer to Ezekiel 10:4.
- This is the cloud of glory that overshadowed Mary when she conceived Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit; refer to Luke 1:35.
- This is the cloud present at the transfiguration of Jesus; refer to Luke 9:34-35.
- This is the cloud of glory that received Jesus into heaven at his ascension; refer to Acts 1:9.
- This is the cloud that will display the glory of Jesus Christ when he returns in triumph to this earth; refer to Luke 21:27 and Revelation 1:7.

It is worthy of note that this great outpouring of the glory of God came in the context of intense and dedicated praise. God pours out his glory when his people praise him. Charles Spurgeon comments, "We can never expect to have God in this house, or in our own houses, or in our own hearts, until we begin to praise him. Unless as a people we unanimously, with one heart, though with many tongues, extol the King of kings, farewell to the hope that he will give us his presence in the future."

It is intrinsically known that God is good and that God is love; why should an intense presence of goodness and love make the priests feel they could not continue? Because God is not only goodness and love, he is also holy - and it was the holiness of God that made the priests feel that they could no longer stand in his presence.

The intense sense of the presence of a holy God is not a warm and fuzzy feeling. Men like Peter in Luke 5:8, Isaiah in Isaiah 6:5, and John in Revelation 1:17 felt stricken in the presence of God. This was not because God forced an uncomfortable feeling upon them, but because they simply could not be comfortable sensing the difference between their sinfulness and the overpowering holiness of God.

The priests can also be thought of as those who ministered unto God under the Old Covenant. The New Covenant - the covenant of grace and truth because of

**Jesus:** <<*The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*>> (John 1:17) - offers believers a better access to God.

This glory remained at the temple until Israel utterly rejected God in the days of the divided monarchy. The prophet Ezekiel had a vision of the glory departing from the temple: <<*Then the glory of the Lord went out from the threshold of the house and stopped above the cherubim*>> (Ezekiel 10:18). Thankfully, God also gave Ezekiel a vision of the glory returning: <<*As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east, the spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple*>> (Ezekiel 43:4-5), as it did with the First Coming of Christ: <<*In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified*>> (Luke 2:8-9), and it will shine even brighter at his Second Coming: <<*And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb*>> (Revelation 21:23).

God's steadfast love, Hebrew *hesed*, in particular denotes his covenant commitment to David: <<*I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you*>> (1 Chronicles 17:13), which has finally resulted in this temple.