

January 24

Scriptures: Read 2 Chronicles 1 & 2

Key Verse: “And the temple which I build will be great, for our God is greater than all gods.”
(2 Chronicles 2:5)

Overview

The book of 2 Chronicles continues where 1 Chronicles ended, with the beginning of King Solomon’s reign. Before David died, he made Solomon king and secured pledges from all the leaders of Israel that they would support Solomon and help him with the responsibility of building the Temple. His real inauguration and the high point of his spiritual experience was when the Lord appeared to him at Gibeon, shortly after he began to reign (1:1-13). Gibeon was not far northwest of Jerusalem and was the site of the original tabernacle of Moses, housing the brazen altar. This site and the tent in Jerusalem, which housed the Ark, were the only two legitimate places of worship and sacrifice to God at that time. The other high places of worship to God were often tolerated, but against the law of God concerning the centralized place of worship where He had chosen to put His name (cf. Deuteronomy 12:5).

During the night, after Solomon had offered numerous sacrifices, the Lord appeared to him in a dream (cf. 1 Kings 3:5, 15; for further details see the commentary on the parallel account in 1 Kings 3 and 4). We all know the famous story of how Solomon asked God for wisdom, which was granted to him, along with the things he did not ask for, such as wealth and honour (cf. James 1:5). The very first request Solomon made, however, was that God would fulfill His promise to his father David concerning the establishment of the Davidic dynasty and the erection of the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 17:11-14). Solomon was truly an honourable and noble son of King David. He remembered his father and, in his request to God, honoured his father’s wish for him to have wisdom in order to rule Israel (1 Chronicles 22:12). As an example of Solomon’s wisdom, we are told of the great wealth Solomon brought to Israel through commercial enterprises (1:14-17).

King David had already made extensive preparations for the Temple, such as gathering abundant supplies, planning the architecture and enlisting workers. It was now Solomon’s job to organize everything. He asked for the help of his father’s friend, Hiram, king of Tyre, because the Phoenicians were known for their extremely skillful craftsmen and their good quality timber. Hiram was glad to oblige, and they quickly formed a business and diplomatic relationship.

Solomon’s letter to King Hiram was a bold witness of the supremacy of the God of Israel to the king of an idolatrous nation. Solomon proclaimed that God was greater than all other gods (2:5) and humbly recognized that God could not be contained in a Temple, since He was omnipresent, but He would graciously call it His House. Hiram surprisingly responded to Solomon with words of faith in the God of Israel, proving that the knowledge of the Lord was spreading among the nations (2:11-12). He also expressed his happiness that God had given his friend David a wise son who would fulfill David’s desire to build the Temple.

Hiram found the perfect master craftsman to send, one who bore the same name as himself, Hiram (or Hiram). He was “endowed with understanding” in all areas of craftsmanship and was half-Israelite; his mother was a Danite and his father a Phoenician (2:13-14). He was to the Temple what Bezaleel was to the Tabernacle (Exodus 31:1-5). God will always provide the right people to do His work.

A great number of non-Israelites who remained in the land (cf. Judges 1) were slave labourers (1 Kings 9:20-22). Solomon organized them in order to accomplish this great task (2:2, 17-18). The wood from Lebanon was floated on the Mediterranean Sea down to the Israelite port city of Joppa. Thousands of “burden bearers” were needed to carry the supplies over the rugged, hilly terrain from Joppa up to Jerusalem, a distance of over fifty kilometers.

Prayer

Lord, even as You gave Solomon wisdom, we also need wisdom for this new day. We pray ‘Your promise which You gave ‘Your servant James concerning wisdom. Thank You for supplying it to us liberally.