

JULY 21

2 Chronicles 4:1-6:11

So, if you had been raised in Babylon and someone mentioned the palace of Nebuchadnezzar and the Hanging Gardens, you could close your eyes and see it. Then your parents or some leader would come along and mention that you are a Jew. Then they tell you that this is the most amazing privilege to belong to God, and you would agree, but in your mind's eye, you don't have land and you don't have any "thing" to be proud of. Ezra and the Spirit are painting a picture of the glory of Jerusalem. The temple was something to be proud of. In the past, it was a glorious and amazing structure. The question was, would people be willing to leave the comforts and prosperity of Babylon and Persia and return to Israel? And for the people who did return, would they take pride in rebuilding the temple? I think that is some of what Ezra and the Spirit are doing in writing this.

So if you were giving these chapters a name or title to generally describe their contents, what would you title them? These are the kinds of Bible study exercises that teach you how to observe and to think through what the Lord's purpose is in giving you this information. And as you read through these chapters, make as many observations that interest you, speak to you or say something to you about being a disciple in the harvest.

2 Chronicles 4 (your title here)

Vs. 1-6 You have to admit that this all would have looked impressive. The altar was 15 ft. high, and there were steps to get to the top. The sea could hold 17,500 gallons, but according to 1 Kings 7:26 it was not filled to capacity. The exiles could have been awed by all of this.

Vs. 7-8 These lampstands and tables were in the Holy Place, the first room in the temple. Originally there had only been one lampstand and one table for the bread of the Presence. For Solomon to have changed this means that it was probably one of those instructions that the Lord gave to David.

Vs. 9-10 This describes what was placed outside in the inner court where the sacrifices were made, and in the outer court where the people gathered for feasts. When Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, went in to burn incense at the hour of prayer, the people were in the outer court praying and he walked through the inner courtyard into the Holy Place.

Vs. 11-18 This tells us who the main craftsmen were, what they did, and where their foundry was located. All of this was under Solomon's personal direction.

Vs. 19-22 The emphasis for the exiles here is that everything was made with the purest gold. It was glorious and on par with anything they had ever seen in Babylon or in Persia.

2 Chronicles 5 (your title here)

V. 1 Not only was the temple finished by Solomon, but the treasury was filled with such vast amounts of metals that Israel, at that time, was probably the richest nation on earth. Again, that was a sign of God's blessing and Israel's glory.

Vs. 2-14 We have already read two different occasions when David moved the ark. This was the fulfillment of David's dream and passion. It wasn't just having a cool-looking, world-class temple; but David knew that God dwelt between the cherubim, and David wanted God to dwell near him in a place of honor. The cover of the ark was gold with two cherubim facing each other. This was the mercy seat where the blood was sprinkled for the Day of Atonement for the nation. This was what David wanted. For God to have a house near him would have been a dream come true, and it all revolved around the ark of the covenant.

V. 8 Solomon, on David's direction, made a cherubim carving to be above the ark.

V. 12 This is why David had organized these singers. I'll bet David even gave Solomon instructions on what they were to sing.

V. 14 And the Lord blessed this. If you were an Israelite in exile, wondering what was so cool about belonging to Israel, this would be the reason. Babylon had nothing that could compete with this.

2 Chronicles 6:1-11 (your title here)

What Solomon is going to say here, and God's response to it, is another moment when a defining event in the plan of redemption took place. God would vow to make this His home on earth. Although the temple has been destroyed twice since then, prophetic Scripture assures us that Jesus will return to Jerusalem and reign in the temple as His palace during the Millennial Kingdom.

Vs. 1-3 Solomon addressed the Lord, inspired by what had just taken place. Just as a slight word of caution, notice that Solomon uses *I* in four places. For some reason, that looks kind of self-exalting to me.

Vs. 4-9 This is Solomon recounting God's declarations regarding Israel, Jerusalem and now the building of the temple. These would be the promises that Solomon would invoke to secure God's eternal promise to Zion and to the temple.

Vs. 10-11 Now Solomon is saying that it has all been accomplished, and tomorrow Solomon will plead for God's commitment to the city and to that house.

There is no "I" in team. Anyway, to this point, you can see the Spirit and Ezra showing Israel they should be awed by the grandeur God Himself brought to Israel. Tomorrow will blow them away.

And to think, that what we have in Jesus makes all this look like dust in the wind. We have become the temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. We are not our own; we were bought with a price; so we are to glorify God in our bodies by bearing much fruit in the harvest and so proving to be disciples of our Lord.

Romans 7:1-13

Vs. 1-3 This is one of those verses where Paul addresses a specific group within the Roman church. Although this could be *law* in general, it is obvious by v. 7 that the Law of Moses is meant. This argument follows the logic of chapter 6. A death has occurred so we are no longer bound to the law as a way to follow God.

Vs. 4-6 This is the explanation of what Paul is saying about the law and sin. Verse 5 is really important to understand what is going on in this conflict. So, what do you understand?

V. 6 is a very key verse in Paul's argument. The RSV says *the new life of the Spirit*. I think this is accurate and this "new life" will be explained more in chapter 8.

Notice the contrast here. Either you face or follow God through the law, or you approach God through the new life of the Spirit. One way causes sin to rage. The other way responds in love to Christ's love, and sin doesn't get enraged. It becomes powerless.

Vs. 7-12 This is the mechanics of how the sickness within us works. This is why it is important to live in the new life of following the Spirit in the Word and in the love of Christ. Even as Christians, if following God becomes too law- or works-oriented, it enrages the sin within us.

V. 9 is where we get the teaching on the age of accountability. This is a very important verse. Before a person can morally understand right or wrong, they are "alive." The sickness of sin can still be seen in a child, but sin as a volitional, rebelling and damning condition is dormant. But when the "commandment comes," that is, at whatever age for that person they become morally

accountable and "know" good and evil (so to speak), sin awakens in them to rebel against God, and they are immediately judged and "die." A child might do stuff that is angry and sinful, but until they cross the line to moral understanding, it is just the baloney kids do. Once they cross that line, if it is at 4 or 5 or 6, they stand before God accountable to the law and the sin within them reacts to that moral accountability to God.

V. 13 Paul has actually said this a couple of times. In 3:20, Paul said, *For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.* Among other things, the law was given, like a blood test, to show us that we have a disease. We may rationalize and explain away our problem, but all of us know that there is something wrong with us. The law acts as a mirror, showing us our condition, but you can't wash your dirty face with a mirror. You'll cut your face. You need soap, or in our case, the blood of Christ.

Every person who does not know Christ (being saved by Him) stands before God under the law. Facing God through the law causes sin to go nuts. As disciples, how do we face God? It needs to be through the love of Christ and the grace of God.

Psalm 17

We've read this before. What do you observe here, having read of David's life? What are some common themes that should be important to us as disciples?

Vs. 1-5 When David regained his balance after the fear and injustice of being hunted by Saul, David saved Saul's life twice. David could have justified killing Saul, even saying that God had put Saul in David's hand. Yet David honored God and resisted the words of his men in sparing Saul. David was tested and passed.

Vs. 6-9 On this basis David cries for deliverance. God was his only refuge. It is of course interesting that David wanted to build an actual house for God in which David must have imagined taking quiet refuge in His presence.

V. 8 *apple of your eye* = eyeball.

Vs. 10-12 This is in contrast to the pity David showed to Saul. Notice that as David is asking for God's protection, he says *our* and *us*. There isn't a "we" in team either, but David was speaking as a shepherd of the weak who were around him. If David had been caught, they would have been killed also.

Vs. 13-14a This is David's cry for God to rouse Himself and judge the arrogant.

Vs. 14b-15 Notice the note you have for the second part of v. 14, "As for your treasured ones, you fill their womb." I am always impressed that rather than obsess with the problems and with his enemies, David sought God and meditated on His Word. I think that is something God is suggesting to us too.

Notice how this psalm fits well with the verses below from Proverbs.

Proverbs 19:22-23

Is it me, or did we just have three readings today that mentioned God's *steadfast love*? In this case in Proverbs, *steadfast love* is learned from God. Amen!