

The Secret of Solomon's Temple: 2 Chronicles 2:1-18 Explained

Scriptures for Today: 2 Chronicles 2:1-18

2 Chronicles 2:1-18

And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the LORD, and an house for his kingdom. 2 And Solomon told out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them. 3 And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, even so deal with me. 4 Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel. 5 And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods. 6 But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him? 7 Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide. 8 Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees, out of Lebanon: for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and, behold, my servants shall be with thy servants, 9 Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build shall be wonderful great. 10 And, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil. 11 Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them. 12 Hiram said moreover, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the LORD, and an house for his kingdom. 13 And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's, 14 The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father. 15 Now therefore the wheat, and the barley, the oil, and the wine, which my lord hath spoken of, let him send unto his servants: 16 And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need: and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to Joppa; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem. 17 And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred. 18 And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to be bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand to be hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people a work.

INTRODUCTION

Let me ask you a question. What do people notice? The finished building. The finished house. The finished church. The finished project. Nobody drives by a construction site and says: "Wow! Look at that planning!" Nobody takes pictures of blueprints. Nobody celebrates preparation. People celebrate what they can see.

But here's the truth: The most important work happens before anybody sees anything. That's exactly what's happening here in these Scriptures. When people think of Solomon's Temple, they think of gold. They think of beauty. They think of greatness. But before there was a temple, there was preparation.

People think this chapter is about building a temple. It isn't. The temple isn't built in this chapter. There isn't a single wall. There isn't a single room. There isn't a single piece of gold hanging in place. So why does God give us an entire chapter about preparation?

Because God wants us to see something most people miss. The secret of Solomon's Temple wasn't gold. The secret wasn't cedar. The secret wasn't money. The secret was everything that happened before anybody saw anything.

I. SOLOMON HAD A BIGGER VISION

2 Chronicles 2:1-2

And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the LORD, and an house for his kingdom. 2 And Solomon told out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them.

"And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the LORD, and an house for his kingdom." Notice that word: determined. Solomon wasn't daydreaming. He wasn't wishing. He wasn't talking. He was determined.

How many great things never happen because people only talk about them? Everybody talks about: losing weight, reading the Bible, starting a ministry, fixing their marriage, starting to go soul winning, serving God. But determination is different. Determination takes action. There are people who talk about things and then there are people who get things done.

Imagine Solomon standing where the temple will someday stand. Picture that mountain. No temple. No priests. No sacrifices. No glory. Just dirt. Just rocks. Just empty ground. Yet Solomon can already see something nobody else can see. That's vision.

And don't forget something. David wanted to build this temple. David dreamed about this temple. David prepared for this temple. But David never got to see it. Sometimes God lets one generation start the work and another generation finishes it.

Right now, though? There's nothing. No walls. No gold. No building. Just a vision. Yet Solomon already sees it. Great works for God are built long before they are seen.

70,000 men to bear burdens. 80,000 to hew in the mountain. 3,600 to oversee these men and manage these men. 150,000 workers. 3,600 managers. That's a ratio of almost 42 workers to one overseer.

II. SOLOMON KNEW HE COULDN'T DO IT ALONE

2 Chronicles 2:3-10

And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, even so deal with me. 4 Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel. 5 And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods. 6 But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him? 7 Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide. 8 Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees, out of Lebanon: for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and, behold, my servants shall be with thy servants, 9 Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build shall be wonderful great. 10 And, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.

Here's one of the most interesting things in the chapter: Solomon immediately asks for help. He knew he couldn't get this done alone. He didn't have the resources that were needed. This is important.

Why does he ask for help? He's the king. He has power. He has money. God is on his side. Why ask for help? Because Solomon understands something. Nobody builds great things alone.

Imagine someone saying: I'm going to build a house by myself. Lay the foundation. Frame the walls. Run the electrical. Install the plumbing. Finish the roof. Do everything. Most people would laugh. Why? Because great projects require many people. Sometimes you need a helping hand. Sometimes you need someone to help you lift something.

The same is true in church. No one person builds a church. No one person reaches a city. No one person does the work of God alone. We all need help. We need your help. Invite people to church. Tell them about the church. Get them here with us.

Great works for God are built long before they are seen.

III. SOLOMON UNDERSTOOD WHO GOD IS

I want you to look closely at verses 5 and 6 there. This may be the most important part of the chapter. In verse 5, the Bible says: "And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods." Notice something. Solomon isn't impressed with the temple. He's impressed with God.

Why build such a great temple? Because God is great. Then Solomon says something amazing in verse 6. Notice what he says right there in verse 6.

"But who is able to build him an house?" Wait. Didn't Solomon just say he was building a house for God? Yes. But Solomon understands. God cannot be contained in a building. "Seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Him?"

Imagine trying to fit the ocean into a bucket. Impossible. The bucket isn't big enough. God is bigger than any building. God doesn't fit into a building. Think about that. God created the stars. God created the sun. God created the galaxies. God created everything we can see.

And Solomon says: "Who am I then, that I should build him an house?" That's humility. Solomon understands something. The temple is not great because of the gold. The temple is great because of the God it represents.

You might ask then: "Then why build the temple? Why in the world would Solomon be building a temple?" Not because God needs it. Because the people need it. The temple teaches people about God. Great works for God are built long before they are seen.

IV. THE SECRET OF THE TEMPLE

2 Chronicles 2:11-16

Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them. 12 Hiram said moreover, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the LORD, and an house for his kingdom. 13 And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's, 14 The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father. 15 Now therefore the wheat, and the barley, the oil, and the wine, which my lord hath spoken of, let him send unto his servants: 16 And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need: and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to Joppa; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem.

Now Hiram responds. The materials are coming. The workers are coming. The plan is coming together. Everything is moving forward. Imagine ships arriving. Logs floating down from

Lebanon. Workers traveling. Materials gathering. For months people see preparation. They don't see a temple. Just preparation. Plans being put in place.

This is where many people quit. Because preparation isn't exciting. People want results immediately. God often works differently.

Think about an iceberg. Everybody sees the part above the water. Nobody sees the massive part underneath. Yet the part underneath is what holds everything up. That's Solomon's Temple. The temple everybody remembers is above the water. This chapter is everything underneath.

Think about a tree. For years the roots grow underground. Nobody sees them. Nobody applauds them. Nobody celebrates them. Then one day everybody notices this amazing tree. But the roots came first. Nobody thinks about the roots. They see the beautiful tree. Great works for God are built long before they are seen.

V. THE WORK BEHIND THE WORK

2 Chronicles 2:17-18

And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred. 18 And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to be bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand to be hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people a work.

The chapter ends with numbers. Workers. Laborers. Stonecutters. Carriers. Thousands of people. Why does God tell us about all these workers? Because every great work requires people nobody notices.

When people visited Solomon's Temple, they admired the gold. They admired the beauty. They admired the finished building. Nobody talked about the man carrying stones. Nobody talked about the laborer cutting rock. Nobody talked about the worker in the background.

Imagine visiting Solomon's Temple years later. People are staring at the gold. People are staring at the beauty. People are talking about Solomon. Nobody asks: "Who carried the first stone?" Nobody asks: "Who cut the timber?" Nobody asks: "Who hauled the materials?" Yet without those men, there is no temple. Everybody wants Solomon's Temple. Nobody wants the preparation.

People hear the sermon. They don't see the preparation. They don't see the prayer that the truth of God reaches people. People see the meal. They don't see the cooking. People see the clean building. They don't see the cleaning. People see souls saved. They don't see the soul winner knocking doors in the heat and the cold. They don't see the soul winner out walking in the ice. Everybody wants the glory. Nobody wants the preparation.

Great works for God are built long before they are seen. Imagine David looking down from heaven. The logs have arrived. The workers are in place. The plans are coming together. The dream he carried for years is finally becoming reality. He doesn't get to build it. But he helped make it possible.

CONCLUSION

Let me ask you a question. What if God is doing His greatest work in your life right now and nobody can see it yet? What if you're in the preparation stage? What if you're laying foundations? What if you're growing roots? What if God is building something that hasn't appeared above the surface yet?

That's Solomon's Temple. Before there was gold, there was preparation. Before there was glory, there was labor. Before there was a temple, there was determination. And that's the secret. **Great works for God are built long before they are seen.** The temple didn't suddenly appear.

It was built one decision, one worker, one stone, one day at a time. And that's how God usually works in our lives too.

Let's pray.