

## *David and Solomon, Temple of the Lord*

### *The Bible Study*

What you will need:

- Bible, pen and note pad for each participant
- A stone to add to the altar. Paint the stone white and glue some small pieces of Lego on it
- Box of Lego



1 Chronicles 13 - 2 Chronicles 7 and 2 Samuel 24 - 1 Kings 8

"David said to him, 'Let me have the site of your threshing floor so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped. Sell it to me at the full price.' Araunah said to David, 'Take it! Let my lord, the king do whatever pleases him. Look, I will give the oxen for the burnt offerings, the threshing sledges for the wood, and the wheat for the grain offering. I will give all this.' But King David replied to Araunah, 'No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing.'" 1 Chronicles 21:22-24

### **Start with Lego building**

Get participants to choose some Lego to enjoy experimenting with. Put what they have made on display as a centre piece on the table.

1 Chronicles 28

### **Building Projects**

Any project that involves building or altering a building is a complicated process. David desired to build a beautiful home for the Ark of the Covenant and for God. He expressed his desire to the prophet Nathan. As Nathan prayed about David's desire, God spoke and directed him to give David a message. David's desire was a good one, but he would not be the one to build the Temple. The concept, the building plans, the gathering of the materials, and the purchase of the land would be David's responsibility. David's son, Solomon would be the leader who would guide the building of the Temple. The great project spanned many years before it was completed. At the right time the people of the land were allowed to make an offering for the building of the Temple. They gave generously. This allowed them to feel ownership of the Temple and the project had their support. David and Solomon were the leaders, skilled people lent their talents, people gave their gifts, but really God was the architect and builder.

Remember the words David spoke to Solomon "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. He will see to it that all the work related to the Temple of the Lord is finished correctly. The various divisions of priests and Levites will serve in the Temple of God. Others with skills of every kind will volunteer, and the officials and the entire nation are at your command." 28:20 (NLT)

### **Sacred Design**

Many of the classic churches were built to tell the Gospel story in their design. For example the aisles were designed in the shape of the cross. The main aisle was placed in the middle of the church so that those who enter can see the altar. The doorway is the foot of the cross where all must begin their journey with Christ. The altar is the head of the cross and the walkway in front of the altar are the arms of the cross. For many years in The Salvation Army the Holiness Table would be in the middle of the walkway by the platform. The speaking podium was in the middle of the platform. The placement of these two items was to remind us to keep the Word of God and Holy Living central in all we do.

## David's Desire

After David was firmly established as King, he decided to move the Ark of the Covenant to a location where it would be more visible and a symbol that God would be central to all of David's decisions. "David consulted with all his officials, including the generals and captains of his army. Then he addressed the entire assembly of Israel as follows: 'If you approve and if it is the will of the Lord our God, let us send messages to all the Israelites throughout the land, including the priests and Levites in their towns and pasturelands. Let us invite them to come and join us. It is time to bring back the Ark of our God, for we neglected it during the reign of Saul.' The whole assembly agreed to this, for the people could see it was the right thing to do." 1 Chronicles 13:1-4 (NLT)

The desire to move the Ark was a good intention, good motive, but David used the wrong procedure. Read 1 Chronicles 13:5-14. In Exodus 37 we learn that the Ark had been designed to be carried on poles. Numbers 4 tells that the duties of the Kohathite Clan included preparing the Ark when the camp and Tabernacle moved. The Kohathite Clan had specific instructions about moving the most sacred objects from the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. All items were covered and carried on long poles. In his eagerness to please God, David neglected to follow procedures set in place to protect the people of God. David decided to leave the Ark at the home of Obed-Edom rather than continue to move it to Jerusalem.

David built several buildings in Jerusalem in the section known as the City of David. He also prepared a place for the Ark. We read in chapter 15 that David now followed the procedures for carrying the Ark. Chapter 16 covers the successful arrival of the Ark and the time of celebration. The chapter also includes a Psalm of David. The closing verses of the chapter tell us that the Ark was in Jerusalem but the Tabernacle was still located in Gibeon. The hill of Gibeon was located about eight miles northwest of Jerusalem. After everyone went home and David was settled in his palace, he began to consider that the Ark was housed in a tent while he had a beautiful home. He called the prophet Nathan to talk about building a permanent and beautiful place for the Lord. Later that night God told Nathan that David's desire was an honourable desire, but that it would be David's son who would build the Temple. Because David wanted to build a house for God to demonstrate his adoration and devotion, God promised to build a "house" or dynasty of kings for David.

Skipping to 1 Chronicles 21 we discover once again that David would make decisions contrary to the Law of God. Verse one of the chapter states that Satan, the adversary, rose up against Israel and caused David to take a census. Exodus 30:12 gave specific instructions for how to take a census. "When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each one must pay the LORD a ransom for his life at the time he is counted. Then no plague will come on them when you number them." This time it was the prophet Gad who had the job to confront David. David was offered three choices for the punishment that the nation would endure as a result of his foolish decision to take a census. Verse 13 records that David chose to fall into the merciful hands of God rather than the hands of man.

The Lord sent a plague on Israel. It seems rather unfair that the people of Israel would have to suffer because of the mistakes of their leader until you consider that the people also prospered because of the decisions of their leader. The death angel was standing by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite when God decided that the nation had been punished enough. The angel of the Lord told Gad to instruct David to build an altar to the Lord at the threshing floor. David approached Araunah and offered to buy the threshing floor. Araunah had seen the death angel and offered to give David the threshing floor, as well as his oxen, the wooden tools used in threshing and the grain. David refused the offer stating that he could not make a sacrifice that did not cost him. He paid full price. David built the altar and made the sacrifice. As David was praying, God answered his prayer by sending fire from heaven to burn up the offering. This location was chosen to be the place where they would build Temple of the Lord. It is thought by many that this is also the place where Abraham went to offer Isaac.

"Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. He will see to it that all the work related to the Temple of the Lord is finished correctly. The various divisions of priests and Levites will serve in the Temple of God. Others with skills of every kind will volunteer, and the officials and the entire nation are at your command." 28:20 (NLT)

Solomon was crowned king. His first act of taking control of the kingdom was to go and visit the Tabernacle which

was still located in Gibeon. He offered a sacrifice on the bronze altar. That night God appeared to Solomon in a dream and asked him what he wanted. Solomon asked for wisdom and knowledge so that he could properly rule the kingdom. Scripture records that God was pleased with the request. Solomon continued to make preparations for building and finally in chapter 3 the building began.

The building of the first Temple, often called Solomon's Temple was a fantastic engineering feat of the day. Tradition relates that in the building of King Solomon's temple there was a stone of such peculiar shape that the workmen could find no place for it, though it was regularly cut with great care, and contained the sign of the Master. When the temple was near completion a place was found for the stone which the builders had through ignorance rejected. It was the keystone of the Royal Arch. The keystone is the stone fitted in to hold the arch or the building together. The keystone unites all the sides and make the building complete. There is also tradition and myth about what is called the foundation stone. There is a claim that the Dome of the Rock was built over the foundation stone. The foundation stone traditions also include that this is the rock where Abraham offered Isaac and the stone that Jacob used as a pillow. Some claim that the Ark was placed on the foundation stone. It all makes interesting reading and speculation. We do know that spiritually and symbolically Jesus is the cornerstone, the keystone and the foundation stone. Look up Ephesians 2:20 and 1 Peter 2:6. In Matthew 21:42-44 Jesus refers to the stone rejected by the builders. When we say Jesus is the keystone, we mean He is the one who unites all truth and holds the building together.

When the Temple was completed it was ready to be dedicated. The dedication took place during the Festival of the Shelters also known as the Festival of the Tabernacle or Booths. (The word tabernacle means dwelling or tent.) The Bible records at that very moment a cloud filled the Temple of the Lord. The priests could not continue because of the glorious Presence of the Lord. The same thing happened hundreds of years before when the Tabernacle was dedicated in the wilderness.

Solomon summarised the process of building the Temple and prayed a prayer of dedication. (Chapter 6)

After the dedication ceremonies were completed, God appeared to Solomon and made a significant proclamation. "Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land. My eyes will be open and my ears attentive to every prayer made in this place. For I have chosen this Temple and set it apart to be holy—a place where my name will be honoured forever. I will always watch over it, for it is dear to my heart." We believe that this promise still applies to those of us who live today. We are called by our Father's name because of what Jesus did for us. "But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God." John 1:12-13 (NLT)

The building of the Temple was a significant step in history and in the evolving of humanities' understanding of God. Both the Tabernacle and the Temple helped unify and solidify the Hebrew people. The promise made to David that God would build a house – a dynasty of kings was another building block in the revelation of who Jesus would be when God became flesh to dwell among us. The glory of the Presence of the Lord took the form of a cloud when it filled the Tabernacle and the Temple on the day those two dwelling places were dedicated. We read in Isaiah 7:14 that one of the titles of Jesus would be "God with us – Immanuel." John 1:14 tells us that the Word (another name for Jesus) became flesh and dwelled among us. The word for "dwell" is tabernacle. That same verse tells us that the glory of God was revealed in Jesus and He was full of grace and truth. Please look up 1 John 1:1-3 for more insight into the subject. Read 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19. What do those verses say about the modern day temples of God?

Sadly even though Solomon had a great start and for most of his rule was a good king, he began to turn away from God and lost his way. The book of Ecclesiastes is attributed to Solomon and it is a depressing look at life. The book begins with a short introduction of the author and launches in to a bleak statement: "Everything is meaningless..." The writer speaks of the futility of wisdom, of pleasure and of work. He goes on to talk about the futility of political power and wealth. Yet he emphasises the importance of fearing and obeying God. His concluding thought was that even though all was meaningless (12:8) it was still better to fear God and obey Him.

We look at 1 Kings 11 for a summary of Solomon's last years. Even though God had clearly forbidden the people of Israel to intermarry with the people of Canaan because they would lead them to worship false gods, Solomon married women from the surrounding nations. One thought is that the marriages were political marriages to advance his kingdom and build his wealth. That would be a poor enough motive, but if true, it showed Solomon trusted more in human alliance than in God. 1 Kings 11:11 sums up God's response: "Since you have not kept my covenant and have disobeyed my decrees, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants." (TLB)

1 Kings 11 also speaks about the enemies God raised up against Solomon. Following Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam became the next king. Rehoboam rejected the advice of the men who had counselled his father Solomon and chose to listen to the advice of his friends. War was the result. The ten tribes of the north united under the leadership of Jeroboam while only the tribes of Benjamin and Judah stayed with Rehoboam.

Jeroboam built up the city of Shechem for his capitol. He began to worry about losing the people if they returned to Jerusalem to worship God and for the sacred festivals. His solution was to make two calf idols and set them up in the north and the south of the kingdom. He also built shrines in pagan high places and instituted a festival similar to and held at the same time as the Feast of the Tabernacle. This was the beginning of a long history of idol worship. The kings of the northern kingdom, called Israel would constantly make decisions leading the Hebrew people away from God. See 1 Kings 13 and 14 for more about Jeroboam.

It is interesting that once again idols in the shape of calves were chosen as a substitute for God. Aaron made a golden calf in the wilderness when the people thought Moses was not going to survive his mountain top experience. Egypt had been full of calf shaped idols. The household idols that Rachel stole from her father Laban would have included a calf shaped idol. Today the term the "golden calf" refers to anything that takes God's place in our priorities or worship. We must take care to love God with all of our heart and guard our hearts against anything and anyone who would turn us away from God. Keep your eyes on Jesus the author and finisher of our journey. Have a great ending!