

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: GAINING DIRECTION OUT OF THE AIMLESSNESS OF APOSTASY

Part III: Gaining Direction From God's Work In The Reign Of Solomon, 2 Chronicles 1-9

B. Learning To Give A WISE And Thus EFFECTIVE Testimony In The Building Used For Worship (2 Chronicles 2:1-18)

I. Introduction

- A. Christians have often debated how ornate or how large a Church building should be to please God, and that with varying degrees of disunity not to mention mixed reviews from unbelieving onlookers!
- B. Solomon supplied a wise and effective example for us in this matter, one that left a good testimony with the pagan king of Tyre whose workmen he hired to construct the temple edifice (as follows):

II. Learning To Give A WISE And Thus EFFECTIVE Testimony In The Building Used For Worship.

- A. In keeping with the wishes of his father, David, Solomon determined to build the temple, 2 Chron. 2:1.
- B. In the process, he began to collect resident foreigners in the nation to be laborers for this construction, 2:2.
- C. However, recognizing the skill limitations of his people in constructing elaborate buildings, and aware of the renowned expertise of the workmen of Hiram, king of Tyre that David used to build his palace, Solomon sent word to Hiram to ask for his services in constructing the temple of God, 2 Chron. 2:3-4a.
- D. In communicating with this pagan king who held to many local deities (Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 620f), Solomon exemplified a wise and effective testimony regarding the temple construction, 2 Chron. 2:4b-16:
 - 1. Solomon **wisely** explained in the building he wanted Hiram to build what his **beliefs** were, 2:4b-6b:
 - a. First, Solomon explained that he wanted a temple built that would honor God as a **vehicle** for God's **people** to use in their **regular worship services** in **honorable**, **decent** ways, 2 Chronicles 2:4b.
 - b. Second, Solomon explained that the temple needed to be **magnificent** to reveal that **Israel's God**, unlike the pagan deities of the Gentiles, was God **over all** rather than just a local deity, 2 Chron. 2:5.
 - c. Third, Solomon then explained that God as Sovereign Lord was really too lofty to house and that Solomon as a mere a man could not actually house God, so **though** the temple was to be **beautiful**, it was to be **modest** enough in **functionality** that **God** might rightly **MEET** with His **people**, 2:6.
 - 2. So, Solomon asked for Hiram's help toward meeting each of these goals in building the temple, 2:7-10:
 - a. To make the temple beautiful, Solomon asked Hiram for a skilled craftsman from Tyre to oversee the work, and for luxurious wood from Lebanon's forests for the building, 2 Chronicles 2:7, 8-9.
 - b. Solomon offered to pay Hiram for his services in terms of ample food provisions, 2 Chronicles 2:10.
 - 3. The pagan Hiram's response shows he respected Solomon's **testimony** in the matter, 2 Chron. 2:11-16:
 - a. Hiram's answer to Solomon prefaced his remarks with a compliment for Solomon's plan, stating God must have loved His people, Israel to give them Solomon as their king, 2 Chron. 2:11. Clearly, Hiram respected Solomon's intent not to satisfy his own ego in the temple construction by making it excessively large, but to make it serviceable for God's people as well as honorable for his God!
 - b. Hiram also expressed how impressed he was with Solomon's discretion and understanding behind his approach to the temple construction, 2 Chronicles 2:12 ESV. Solomon's "common sense honesty" in respecting both God's greatness and the limitations of him and his people was admired!
 - c. Though Hiram was a pagan who worshiped local deities, in respect of Solomon's testimony, Hiram courteously referred to Israel's God as Maker of heaven and earth, 2 Chronicles 2:12; *Ibid.*, p. 621.
 - d. Accordingly, Hiram sent a skilled craftsman who was part Jewish and part Tyrian to be an effective teacher of Solomon's laborers on how to construct the various parts of the temple, 2 Chron. 2:13-14.
 - e. Hiram accepted Solomon's offer of payment, and added he would fell the luxury lumber and float it from Tyre down to Joppa in Israel as rafts on the Mediterranean Sea, 2 Chronicles 2:15-16.
- E. Solomon thus arranged for his laborers to begin mobilizing to build the temple, 2 Chronicles 2:17-18.

Lesson: Solomon testified to pagan king Hiram that his **GOD** was **INFINITELY GREAT**, but that **MAN** was **FINITELY WEAK** and **NEEDY**, so that the temple was to focus on the **CONDESCENDING GRACE** of God to **MAN**! This testimony was understood and **ADMIRERD** by the pagan king.

Application: May our worship building itself **TESTIFY** to the **UNSAVED** of our **GREAT GOD'S CONDESCENDING GRACE** to **MAN**, that it thus **BLEND BEAUTY** with **FUNCTIONALITY** in the **CULTURE** of our **ERA** to reveal it is a place where **GOD** and **MAN** can **MEET** for **FELLOWSHIP**!