

**The Weekly Word**  
February 5-11, 2018

Welcome to February and enjoy the story of God's OT people. Happy reading...  
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

**Monday, February 5: 2Chronicles 2- A temple for the Lord...**

Solomon, now established, commissions the building of the temple. I found myself wondering, what exactly is the temple?

It is a holy place. It will house the ark, which has been described as the footstool of the Lord (1Chronicles 28:2). Solomon answers my question in his dialogue with Hiram, king of Tyre, who will provide the lumber for the temple.

*The temple I am going to build will be great, because our God is greater than all other gods. But who is able to build a temple for him, since the heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain him? Who then am I to build a temple for him, except as a place to burn sacrifices before him? (5-6).*

The temple is a showcase for the Lord, a grand monument primarily for the offering of sacrifices to the Lord. As such, the temple is a place where people can connect with the Lord personally, as well as the corporate center for the worship of Yahweh. The structure itself announces the greatness of the Lord. Its grand scale and elaborate ornamentation speaks to the indescribability of the Lord Himself.

But the temple must never be confused with the Lord Himself, *since the heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain the Lord*, much less a human constructed building.

While considering the temple, my mind made the leap to the church and believers in Jesus, being the temple of the Lord today.

We, God's people, are His showcases to the world. Instead of there being one temple in one location, now the temple of the Lord can be found almost anywhere in the world. Christ followers working in fields, rice patties, office buildings and open seas, serving in the military or government, golden agers and millennial are all showcases for the Lord. In us and through the way we live, people are supposed to see the grandeur of the Lord.

But let us never get a big head over this; we are not the Lord, never will be and never can be. We are merely a display through which people receive the tiniest glimpse of the grandeur and wonder of the Lord God Almighty.

I am awed and humbled by these thoughts.

Awed, that God would choose to display Himself to the world through me. Humbled because I am completely and utterly unworthy of this calling. I can't find the correct words... I am also disappointed, saddened (?) because I am such a poor showcase. With all the mars of sin in my life I am afraid that people are seeing a poor, almost unrecognizable, representation of the Lord in my life. My eyes tear at my lack...

*Oh, God, I do not know how or what to pray... make me a better showcase for Your glory. Like a fine craftsman, shave off my blemishes, fill my cracks and replace my weak and broken parts so that I might better display Your wonder. Do this Lord, not for me or my sake, but for Yours.*

*All glory, laud and honor be Yours, Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit. I pray through Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Tuesday, February 6: 2Chronicles 3- The Temple...

Opulent, extravagant, over-the-top, such was the temple Solomon built. Gold everywhere, literally. Measurements precise. Symbolism rich. Such was the temple Solomon built.

One difference between this temple and the opulence of some of the European estate/castles, like Versailles, is that the temple was dedicated to and honoring the Lord God Almighty, not a particular king or family dynasty. It was designed to be as a place of sacrifice and performing the rituals of faith. A second difference was its size. 60 cubits by 20 cubits translates to roughly 90 feet by 30 feet. There are rooms in Versailles, which are larger.

David's design and Solomon's execution was to honor the Lord, to extol the God who called them to be a people and protects them as a people. And I am also reminded that David put a huge amount of his personal wealth into the construction of the temple.

I am wondering how can I and do I honor the Lord in my life? I am certainly not going to build a temple or a shrine of any kind. So my measurement would be in faithfulness... a few probing questions trickle out of my thoughts:

Am I sacrificial?

Am I dedicated?

Do I give the Lord my best or leftovers?

Am I extravagant or 'opulent' in my honoring of the Lord?

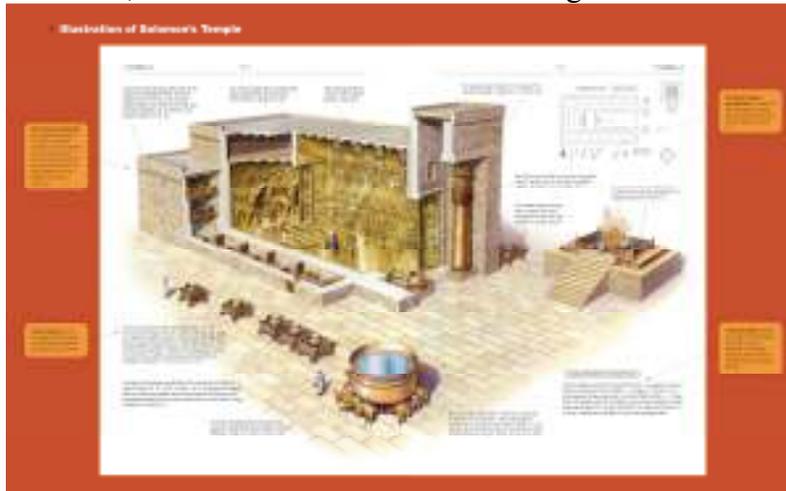
Looking at my life would others see the greatness of the Lord as they did when they looked at the temple?

*Lord, I battle mixed motives all the time. Purify my life. Burn off the chaff that my life might be of service to You. Through Jesus, I pray. Amen.*

## Wednesday, February 7: 2Chronicles 4- ...

The detail in this chapter was too much for me to imagine. So I spent some time looking on the Internet for images of the temple, just so I could visualize everything.

Elaborate, ornate and functional is how I might describe it. Maybe this picture will help you.



The worship of God was central to Israel and sacrifice ~~was~~ of animals was essential to Israelite worship.

I am wondering how central worship is my life these days.?

## Thursday, February 8: 2Chronicles 5- ...

This chapter closes with the placing of the ark in the holy of holies. At that point we read, *The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the LORD and sang: "He is good; his love endures forever."*

*Then the temple of the LORD was filled with the cloud, and the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple of God (13-14).*

The imagery of the cloud filling the temple reminded me of the cloud God filled as He led Israel through the desert... cloud by day and fire by night (Exodus xx).

I found myself contemplating the presence of God... here God's presence is experienced in the cloud. In Theophanys it is through the Angel of the Lord. Moses also experienced the Lord in the still small voice (xx). Most perfectly, humankind has experienced the presence of the Lord in the person of Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh (John 1:1-14).

The presence of God has born His people through across the ages. Moses at one point refused to continue if the presence of God was not with him (Exodus bb). Sso important is the presence of God.

How have I and how do I experience the presence of the Lord?

--In the stillness of my quiet time as God gives me a thought or understanding in the text.

--As I speak with Him in prayer and sense His answer or His nearness.

--In worship, particularly in those moments of community praise, when our hearts joined together seem to soar to the throne.

--In moments of hush in worship or in private when I feel enveloped by the Lord.

--When I am engaged in service and ministry for and with Him.

--When the Spirit releases a spiritual gift for ministry.

These are among the many ways I have and do experience the Lord's presence. How about you?

*Oh, Lord, praise be to You for Your presence. Thank You for allowing me to experience You and to do so in different ways... a reminder that You are beyond full understanding. Open my heart that I might seek You and long for You all the days of my life. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Friday, February 9: 2Chronicles 6...

My time with the Lord was interesting this morning. As I sat down to read this amazingly faithful temple dedication prayer by Solomon, swimming in the back of my head was the thought, How did such a faithful man stray so far from the Lord?

I know the Solomon's story well enough to know that his many wives led him astray. I kept wondering, how did that happen? Deep down inside I was not as concerned about Solomon as I was about me...

If the man who prayed this prayer fell, then anyone could fall. Such was my reasoning.

My desire was to know what I could do to maintain faithfulness. TAnd the thought that kept rising to the top as I pondered this question, from one angle and another is spiritual vigilance...

Staying with the Lord day in and day out.

Regular examination of my life under the scrutiny of the Word and Spirit.

Confession and repentance.

Regular worship with the body of Christ.

Accountability with other brothers.

And the like...

Oh, yes, trusting in the perseverance of the saints, trusting that God will bring those He has called home to eternity with Him.

Romans 8vv

*In all of this Lord, what I cling to most strongly is Your right arm. You will preserve my life and bring me to glory. I am not absolving myself from doing the spiritual disciplines needed to grow and mature, but my trust is not in me. It is in YOU! Alleluia to the God Most High! Through Jesus, my Lord, I pray. Amen*

Note: my burdened heart lifted as I realized my fate is in God's hands. Alleluia.

### **Saturday, February 10: 2Chronicles 7...**

I was captivated by the immensity of the sacrifice. *And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand head of cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats. So the king and all the people dedicated the temple of God (5, underline mine). 144 thousand animals sacrificed. Even if that is describing the 7 days of worship that is over 20,000 animals sacrificed a day for 7 days!*

On many levels I cannot fathom those numbers. I can't imagine the amount of work necessary to butcher all those animals, ~~and~~ the fires needed to sacrifice them, and the streams of blood (because all the blood needs to be drained before they are burned).

What a celebration... what an extravagant celebration of praise to the Lord!:-

I am trying to fathom a comparable worship event... honestly, I can't.

Then again, this was a momentous event. God was establishing a permanent physical presence with the dedication of the temple. And so a level of worship unseen before is warranted.

As I was writing this, I thought, "Yes, there was a comparable momentous event. The incarnation of Jesus... the one and only son born in Bethlehem." And for that event, God arranged for a heavenly choir and chorus of angels to mark that event. *Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests"* (Luke 2:13-14).

God is worthy of praise and worship... this thought washes over me like a wave pounding the beach shore...

Yes, God –Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit –is most worthy of praise.

What a wonderful devotion as I prepare to gather with God's people tomorrow in worship!

*Lord, may we raise the roof in adoration of You tomorrow when we gather to celebrate You tomorrow. Fill our gathering with Your presence and allow us to declare Your praise for all the world to hear. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

### **Sunday, February 11, 2018, Sunday Worship**

*If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.*

*If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at [office@pcogonline.org](mailto:office@pcogonline.org).*

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.