CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JANUARY 2024

Scripture Story: 2 Chronicles 5:2–14.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 2.

a house for God



Photo by Jennifer and Company

flashlight

"In bringing to the temple the sacred ark containing the two tables of stone on which were written by the finger of God the precepts of the Decalogue, Solomon had followed the example of his father David. Every six paces he sacrificed. With singing and with music and with great ceremony, 'the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy place' " (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 38).

key text

"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."

(2 Chronicles 5:13, NIV)

what do you think?

Which of the following places would you choose as your spot, your special place to meet and talk with God?

1. Your room
2. Beside a lake
3. A park
4. On a bench downtown in the city
5. In the woods
6. In your church sanctuary

Share what place you chose and why. What's special about your spot with God?

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did you know?

The building of the Lord's temple was no small undertaking. Solomon conscripted 30,000 Israelite men to work in Lebanon. He had 70,000 men to carry materials and 80,000 dedicated to cutting out the best stones in the nearby hills. He needed 3,300 foremen to oversee the work. In spite of the fact that Solomon had many workers, the building of the temple still took seven years to finish.

INTO THE STORY

"Then Solomon summoned to Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the LORD's covenant from Zion, the City of David. And all the Israelites came together to the king at the time of the festival in the seventh month.

"When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the Levites took up the ark, and they brought up the ark and the tent of meeting and all the sacred furnishings in it. The Levitical priests carried them up; and King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel that had gathered about him were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be recorded or counted.

"The priests then brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark and covered the ark and its carrying poles. These poles were so long that their ends, extending from the ark, could be seen from in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside the Holy Place; and they are still there today. There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

"The priests then withdrew from the Holy Place. All the priests who were there had consecrated themselves, regardless of their divisions. All the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and relatives—stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. 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."

(2 Chronicles 5:2-14, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What aspects of this Scripture story are new to you?

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Draw a *rectangle* around the "minor characters" in the story.

Circle the person who is the main focus of the passage.

What does this passage say to you about the importance and meaning of worship?

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What role did music play in the ceremony?

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What role did the ark of the covenant play in the dedication ceremony?

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The priests sanctified themselves for this ceremony. What does this mean? Does this apply to us? (See 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:23; John 17:17–19; 1 Peter 1:2.)

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punch lines

"Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, 'Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water" **(Revelation 14:6, 7, NIV).**

"LORD, I love the house where you live, the place where your glory dwells" **(Psalm 26:8, NIV).**

"Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only" ' " **(Matthew 4:10, NIV).**

"Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the LORD your God" **(Leviticus 26:1, NIV).**

further insight

"The duty to worship God is based upon the fact that He is the Creator and that to Him all other beings owe their existence."—Ellen G. White, *Lift Him Up*, p. 51

Sabbath

Read 2 Chronicles 5:2–6.

In the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson you were asked to choose a place from the list provided where you and God could meet together. Besides the obvious physical differences between the temple that Solomon built for God and dedicated with an elaborate ceremony and the place you have set aside to talk with God, what similarities do you see between the two places? What differences?

Similarities: _____

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Differences: _____

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What do you think made the temple Solomon constructed special? How can you make your place of worship to God special?

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Sunday

Read Psalm 95:1, 2.

Read carefully the *Into the Story* passage selected. Now complete the *Out of the Story* questions given. One of the questions referred to the role that music plays in worship.

In today's lesson passage, who did the singing during the ceremony?

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What instruments were played?

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Think about the music that accompanies the worship in your church. Do you feel that it enhances or detracts from the worship experience? Explain.

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The song sung at the temple dedication was fairly simple by today's standards. What happened when these simple words were sung?

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Monday

Read 2 Chronicles 5:13.

This week's *Key Text* is one of the most powerful in all of Scripture. It tells us that the glory of God filled the temple, so much so that the priests could not enter it. There are services throughout Scripture that are holy and exalted, yet God never made His glory visible in them.

Why did God choose to make His presence visible during the dedication of Solomon's temple? What do you think moved Him to do so?

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What can you do to attract God's presence to your life?

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Tuesday

Read 2 Chronicles 6:11.

This week's *Flashlight* shines on an often overlooked part of the dedication ceremony for the Jerusalem temple: the ark of God.

The ark held the two tables of stone given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai. On them were written the Ten Commandments.

What do you think was the purpose of stopping every six paces to offer sacrifices to God before the ark? What was Solomon trying to say to God through this practice?

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Wednesday

Read this week's *Punch Lines*, paying close attention to Psalm 26:8. King David expresses his love for God's house in a fit of raw emotion. This is no doubt where Solomon developed his passion for worshiping God.

If you love God's house—your church—what can you do to make it better? How might you improve it?

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Thursday

Read John 4:24.

Worship to God is both a personal experience and a corporate experience. There is something special about worshiping God with people who share a love for God and a desire to live for Him.

How can you help people who are sick and cannot get to church experience the joy of corporate worship? Why not gather some friends together and plan a worship service at the home of a sick member?

Friday

Read Leviticus 26:1.

Believe it or not, God wants His glory to be seen in your life, just as it was seen during Solomon's special dedication of the temple. What can you do to build a place in your life for God? What would you have to give up? What music sacrifices would you offer?

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this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 2.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.