

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
JANUARY2024

a house for God

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

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This week's lesson captures the spiritual high point of King Solomon's life. He lived many years, but his greatest achievement occurred early in his reign. That accomplishment was the building and dedication of a permanent place where God's presence could dwell with His people.

Solomon spared no expense in the construction of the temple, conscripted as much manual labor as needed, and then found artisans from Egypt who could do the special work of the temple. This latter act foreshadowed his penchant for depending on other nations for that which he should have trusted God.

Nonetheless, the righteous desire of Solomon to build a house for God should be the same desire that drives us to build a place for God in our lives. The care Solomon demonstrates in the building of the temple can be likened to that which we should exhibit in the development of a Christian character. We should use no shoddy materials in this process, so that we may render to God the best that we have to give.

Solomon also understood the sanctity of God's holy law kept in the ark. The law, transcript of God's character, was very much at the heart of the ceremony. Today, it should be written on our hearts as we seek to love, worship, and obey God.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand that we were created to worship God. *(Know)*
- Feel the necessity to give God their best in all areas of life. *(Feel)*
- Respond by selecting a place where they can meet with God each day. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Father, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 3

"God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also those of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Deut. 4:35; Ps. 110:1, 4; John 3:16; 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:28; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 John 4:8; Rev. 4:11.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Ask students to share the "form" their worship takes in their selected spot for communication with God. Share aspects from your own life that are

closely tied to worshiping God.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) was present at the Vienna Music Hall, where his oratorio *The Creation* was being performed, the story goes. Weakened by age, the great composer was confined to a wheelchair. As the majestic work moved along, the audience was caught up with tremendous emotion. When the passage "And there was light!" was reached, the chorus and orchestra burst forth in such power that the crowd could no longer restrain its enthusiasm.

The vast assembly rose in spontaneous applause. Haydn struggled to stand and motioned for silence. With his hand pointed toward heaven, he said, "No, no, not from me, but from thence comes all!" Having given the glory and praise to the Creator, he fell back into his chair exhausted (see *Our Daily Bread*, September 20, 1992).

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Something truly special happens when praise and honor are directed toward the One who alone deserves it. That's what Haydn understood, and it's also what King Solomon understood. The ingenuity used to build the magnificent temple he had just constructed for God did not come from Solomon. The materials were not of his making. Solomon did the only thing that any human can do at such an awesome moment; he directed all glory to God.

Worship is the heartbeat of the Christian's life, and we are at our best when we are praising and worshiping God.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- *Mark* each place where the ark of the covenant is mentioned. What is its significance in this passage?
- Solomon is the nation's political leader. Does the passage reveal him to be its spiritual leader also?
- *Underline* the places where there is a major change in the tone of the ceremony.
- What contribution does music make to the service? What is the significance of the song that is sung and why does the writer highlight the oneness of the musicians and singers?
- *Circle* the spots in the text where you see God.
- Those involved in the worship service dressed a certain way, even the musicians. How do we reconcile this with the "come as you are" idea of worship?
- Is there a right or wrong way to worship God? (See Genesis 4:1–7)

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story: Isaiah 6:1–8; Romans 12:1–5; Isaiah 55; Habakuk 2:20; Ecclesiastes 5.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. As wise and great as Solomon was, it is evident that his father, David, had a tremendous impact on him. This is seen in the way in which Solomon orchestrated the dedication ceremony for the building of the temple.

   In 1 Chronicles 15:11–16 David summons the tribal leaders and the leaders of the nation to go with him to bring the ark to Jerusalem. When the ark gets to Jerusalem an elaborate ceremony is executed, complete with music, sacrifices, and a special psalm written and performed by none other than David himself (1 Chronicles 16). David's psalm of praise carries much of the sentiment of Solomon's dedicatory prayer. There is no doubt that David greatly influenced his son, but nowhere is it seen more clearly than in the way Solomon carried out the dedication of the temple.
2. Some moments are years in the making. The story of the building of God's temple and its special ceremony was a moment that was centuries in the making. Consider that after God's people were delivered from the hand of Pharaoh, among His first commands to Moses was this: "Have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8, NIV). Moses went on to construct the traveling wilderness sanctuary

that housed the ark as the Israelites wandered through the desert. All the Israelites dreamed of the day when they would have a permanent place for God, one that didn't need to be broken down and hauled everywhere. Countless died never seeing that day. When Solomon completed the temple, he had brought to fruition the dream of numerous Israelites. This dedication was no insignificant occurrence.

3. The spot on which the temple was constructed held special significance to all the Israelites. Ellen G. White writes: "It was here that Abraham, the father of the faithful, had revealed his willingness to sacrifice his only son in obedience to the command of Jehovah. Here God had renewed with Abraham the covenant of blessing, which included the glorious Messianic promise to the human race of deliverance through the sacrifice of the Son of the Most High" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 37).

   This spot was a place of mercy, a place where sins were forgiven, a place of healing.

4. It was evident from God's presence that day that He approved of the worship rendered to Him at the dedication of the temple. But it was not until several years later that God spoke to Solomon directly to let him know just how much He appreciated the seven-year effort that led to the building of the temple: "When

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

Visual Learning

Some students are auditory learners and take in the spoken word to maximum benefit. Some are kinesthetic (sensory) learners, needing experiences that involve movement and the senses. But still others are primarily visual learners.

Consider bringing to class a picture of the Lord's temple built by Solomon. Several of these are available in Jewish history books. Better yet, give the students a living, breathing image of the temple and its worship.

Christian Book Distributors offers a very good DVD titled *Solomon's Temple*. This DVD details the temple's "design, construction, meaning for Israel, and what went on there and why." The video runs about 30 minutes, so you'll no doubt want to select a portion of it to show your students.

Most young people today struggle to see and understand the meaning of the temple in biblical times and its connection with them today. This is one way of making this week's subject more real.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Prophets and Kings. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

Solomon had finished the temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and had succeeded in carrying out all he had in mind to do in the temple of the LORD and in his own palace, the LORD appeared to him at night and said:

" 'I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices. . . .

". . . 'If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land' " (2 Chronicles 7:11–14, NIV).

Some things are worth the wait.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Before class, make copies of a seven-day calendar. Each day of the week should have enough space for the students to make notations. Distribute the one-week calendar. Ask the students to choose a time each day when they will spend time in worship to God. Then ask each to come up with a way to make each day's worship special. (They may choose to listen to a favorite song after completing their lesson, morning devotional, or Bible reading, for example.) Close with a prayer asking God to reveal Himself to the students this week.

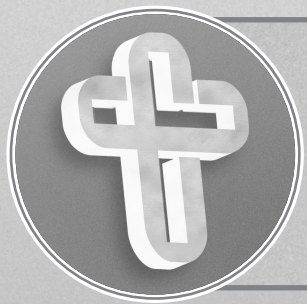
Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The worship of God requires our best efforts. To honor God as He deserves requires a preparation of heart that many neglect. It would have been easy for Solomon to grow weary during the building process. We sometimes forget that Solomon built the temple of the Lord *before* he constructed a palace for himself.

He could have easily decided on second-rate materials when the best proved difficult to get. He could have chosen to cut corners when logistical nightmares occurred during the building process. Perhaps a lesser person would have folded under the pressure, but Solomon was motivated by a vision of God, motivated to put the worship of God at the center of the nation's life. How he could later in his life fall away from so noble a beginning is beyond comprehension.

Solomon had made a request of God for wisdom to rule the people, and God had answered him and given him more than he could ever dream. Fresh from his special revelation from God, he had a burning desire to please God. While he fell during his later life, his early desire to please God calls us to a higher standard of service and worship to God.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages Series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 2.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 2 Chronicles 5:2–14.
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a house for God



Photo by Jennifer and Company

keytext

"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)

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).

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?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What role did music play in the ceremony?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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: _____

_____

_____

Differences: _____

_____

_____

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

_____

_____

_____

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?

_____

_____

What instruments were played?

_____

_____

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

_____

_____

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

_____

_____

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?

_____

_____

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

_____

_____

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?

_____

_____

_____

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.