

According to the Pattern (1 Chronicles 28)

Building a House for God's Name: Studies in 1 & 2 Chronicles

I. REVIEW: BUILDING A HOUSE FOR GOD'S NAME

- A. As the Lord has been at work in our church over the last season, he has been calling us into a focused season of *building the house*. This is not only because of the particular story that the Lord has written for this spiritual family (a season to rebuild after a season of difficulty) but is also a call in light of where we find ourselves in the broader cultural and spiritual moment in our world.
- B. One of the specific ways that we are seeking to understand, strengthen, and establish what God has put before us in this season is by preaching through the books of Chronicles. These books were written to the exiles who had returned from the Babylonian captivity who were charged with repairing the house of the Lord that had been destroyed (see 1 Chr 9.1-2).
- C. The books are designed to inspire a people looking at the “ruins” to take up their place and work in partnership with God's purposes.
- D. In 1 Chronicles 17, David had desired to build a house (dwelling place) for the Lord. We have seen that David possessed a unique revelation of the need for a place where God could rest. This vision consumed his life and leadership, dictating much of what he was given to in his life.

¹Remember, O Lord, in David's favor... ²how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, ³"I will not enter my house or get into my bed, ⁴I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, ⁵until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob. (Ps 132.1-5)

- E. However, God did not allow David to build the temple. Rather, he made a covenant with David, promising to give him a name and a kingdom that would last forever (1 Chr 17.7-14). It would be David's son, Solomon, who would be given the charge to build the temple. The realities of the covenant made with David will govern much of the remainder of the Chronicler's presentation of Israel's history — particularly the ability (or the inability) of the sons of David to order and establish the worship of the Lord (represented in the temple and its worship order) at the center of Israel's life.
- F. In 1 Chronicles 22 the chronicler highlights the lengths to which David went to ready the *resources* (manpower and materials) necessary to build the temple. Then, the Chronicler spends an extended section (chs. 23-27) outlining the meticulous organization of the people required to *facilitate and administrate worship* in the temple.
- G. In this chapter, the Chronicler will highlight the final elements of David's preparation as he emphasizes David's charge to the people (28.1-8), David's charge to Solomon (28.9-10), and the final handing over of the plans to build the temple (28.11-21).

II. DAVID CHARGES THE PEOPLE (28.1-8)

¹David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel, the officials of the tribes, the officers of the divisions that served the king, the commanders of thousands, the commanders of hundreds, the stewards of all the property and livestock of the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, the mighty men and all the seasoned warriors (1 Chr 28.1)

- A. After expending extensive time outlining the preparation of the materials and the administration that would go into building and facilitating temple worship, the Chronicler highlights the task of David seeking to prepare the people and Solomon to *respond to the call* placed upon them by God to build the temple.
- B. The section begins with David assembling all of Israel together. This represents that the whole of the kingdom was to be ordered and oriented around the temple project.

- C. David addresses the assembly by outlining his desire to build a resting place for the Lord that would serve as his footstool upon the earth (cf. 1 Chr 17.1; 22.7-10). However, as has been seen previously in 1 Chronicles, the Lord did not permit David to build the house because of the excessive blood that was on his hands.
- D. Because of this, David outlines the way in which God had particularly elected Solomon for the task before him. In verses 4-7, David follows a fourfold narrowing to emphasize the meticulous providence of God in orchestrating the calling that was before Solomon and the people. Recounting God's choice through the generations serves to highlight God's specific purpose in redemption and it serves to heighten the need for the people to respond to Solomon's leadership.
- E. In verse 8, David gives a specific and particular charge to the people to **respond** to God's sovereign leadership as it was being demonstrated in the choice of Solomon. Not only were the people called upon to receive and follow Solomon as their king, David used the moment to exhort the people to **walk in a spirit of obedience** before the Lord.

⁸Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek out all the commandments of the Lord your God, that you may possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you. (1 Chr 28.8)

1. **Observe:** this speaks of a heart set to walk in a spirit of obedience to the commandments of God. There is a specific importance of obedience that is required in response to God's call upon his people.
2. **Seek out:** This is one of the primary themes of the Chroniclers. We have seen throughout the book that the people of God must seek to walk in the ways of God as he has revealed them (cf. 1 Chr 13; 21).
3. **So that you may possess:** There is a conditional promise tied to the commandment to seek the ways of the Lord and observe (obey) his commandments.

III. DAVID CHARGES SOLOMON (28.9-10)

- A. Turning to his son Solomon, David seeks to prepare him in the most important way necessary to walk before the Lord in the fulfilling of his assignment.
- B. David understands that the **action** of building the temple is remarkably important. However, he first understands that Solomon's **heart posture** in his pursuit of obedience is of supreme importance. Because of this, David charges Solomon to walk with a whole heart before the Lord as he seeks to walk out the calling that has been put before him.
- C. **Whole heart:** The people of God are to seek to live before God with a posture of wholehearted obedience. This means that there is no place of known/willful sin in our lives that we are not seeking to war against by God's grace.

1. Jesus commanded his disciples to be perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect. This speaks of living with a posture of "wholeness" before God — submitting fully to his ways in every area.

⁴⁸You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matt 5.48)

2. This can be closely tied to living with an "undivided heart" or in a manner that is "fully pleasing to the Lord". We pursue this by setting our hearts to walk in obedience before God in every area that he has revealed to us, asking him to strengthen us and dispense his grace for obedience.

¹¹Teach me your ways, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name (Ps 86.11)

⁹that you would be filled with the knowledge of his will.. ¹⁰so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him... ¹¹being strengthened with all power (Col 1.9-11)

- D. **Willing mind:** Similarly, a willing mind is a mind submitted to the ways of God in *what we think* (believe) and *how we think*. We are not to submit our minds to beliefs and thought patterns that are rooted in worldly ways of thinking but are to be renewed in our mind with an eager disposition to submit to God's ways.
1. We first seek to subject our mind to the truth by **renewing our mind** in partnership with God's revealed truth as made known in his word. We repent of and renounce worldly, sinful patterns of thought and receive his truth.

²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom 12.2)
 2. We also do this by seeking to **tear down demonic thought patterns** that seek to exalt themselves against the knowledge of God — waging warfare against them by the means of worship, proclamation, thanksgiving, prayer, sacraments, etc.

⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete. (2 Cor 10.4-6)
- E. **The Lord searches:** The grounds for setting our heart and mind to serve the Lord wholly is rooted in the truth that God looks at the heart. Although obedience to the task was important for Solomon and the people (as it is for us) it must be coupled with a heart of faith and wholehearted submission because God is not merely concerned with the external act. Rather, he searches the hearts and understands the intentions and desires of all people.
1. Throughout the Scripture we see that God is looking for a heart that is toward him.

⁹For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him (2 Chr 16.9)

⁴The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man. (Ps 11.4)
 2. David had a particular understanding that God does not evaluate by appearances but looks at the heart.

⁷But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart (1 Sam 16.7)
 3. We must remember that outward obedience is necessary (i.e., faith looks like something), but is not sufficient. Our obedience to respond to what God is at work doing in our lives (or in our church) must be mixed with a sincere desire to respond to the Lord with the whole of who we are.
 4. God cares about the inclinations of our hearts in the places where no one sees.

⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you (Matt 6.4)
- F. **If you seek him, he will be found:** This is a glorious promise of God's desire to dwell with his people. God acts in his sovereign grace, invites us to respond to him, and promises that if we seek after him with a whole heart, he will be found by us.
1. At the very heart of life with God is the understanding of pursuing him *empowered by the Spirit*. Our greatest destiny is to grow in our knowledge of God that comes through the power of the indwelling Spirit. God has (through redemption planned, purchased, and applied — see Eph 1.3-14) brought us to the place where we can grow in the experience of his Triune life. Although this is the eternal destiny of each believer (to be experienced in fullness), there are elements of this that can be experienced in this life.

2. Often Christians have difficulty understanding the place of pursuit in the life of a Christian. We often struggle to understand the relationship of our pursuit of God to the free gift of God's grace given to us in Christ Jesus. While we *cannot* earn anything in salvation, the grace of God propels us into deeper measures of relationship with him. This is what we were ultimately created for.

¹²Not that I have already obtained this [resurrection] or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus... ¹⁷Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. (Phil 3.12-14, 17)

⁸You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, Lord, do I seek." (Ps 27.8)

²⁰But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. (Jude 20-21)

3. It is clear from the Scripture that the pursuit of Christ is always and only rooted in the free gift of salvation (our justification) before him. We must experience the presence and power of the Spirit in pursuing relationship with Christ not as the means to attain right standing with him but rooted in the right standing we have in him.

IV. ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN (28.II-2I)

- A. David's ordering of the kingdom of Israel around the tabernacle/temple (worship of the Lord) is a remarkable turn in redemptive history. This is directly tied to David's *revelation of worship in the place of God's economy and kingdom*.
- B. David possessed a unique understanding of how God had ordered his creation and sought to bring the whole of his life and assignment into agreement with this order.
- C. David built the tabernacle this way in accordance with the pattern of the heavenly temple that was revealed to him by the Lord.

¹¹Then David gave Solomon his son the plan of the vestibule of the temple, and of its houses, its treasuries, its upper rooms, and its inner chambers, and of the room for the mercy seat; ¹²and the plan of all that he had in mind for the courts of the house of the LORD, all the surrounding chambers... ¹³for the divisions of the priests and of the Levites, and all the work of the service in the house of the LORD; for all the vessels for the service in the house of the LORD... ¹⁹"All this he made clear to me in writing from the hand of the LORD, all the work to be done according to the plan." (I Chr 28.II-19)

- D. Revelation 4-5 describes the order of worship around God's throne (cf. Isa 6). This shows us that those closest to God — his heavenly court — perpetually *agree with him* in the place of worship.

²At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne... ⁸And the four living creatures... never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" (Rev 4.1-8)

- E. Throughout the Scripture, the building of tabernacles and temples have been in accordance with the *pattern of the heavenly temple* revealed by the Lord.

⁴⁰And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain (Exod 25.40)

⁵They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things. For when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God, saying, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain." (Heb 8.5)

²³Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. ²⁴For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. (Heb 9.23-24)

V. AGREEMENT WITH GOD — THE FOUNDATION OF GOD'S GOVERNMENT

- A. Throughout Scripture, there is a close relationship between God's temple and God's kingdom. In other words, God expresses his rule and reign from the place where his presence dwells.
- B. From the beginning of creation, God has desired to order and establish his purposes in the earth through agreement with him. Mankind was created to live in face-to-face **communion with him** (presence) and then work together with him to **fill the earth with the knowledge of his glory** (dominion).
- C. In many ways, the Biblical authors invite us to see the temple as the "center of the world" where God comes to dwell with his people. From this place of encounter and communion, his purposes are then to expand outward and fill the earth.
 1. **Garden of Eden:** Adam was created by God to live in glorious communion with him and given the charge to keep and tend the Garden-sanctuary of Eden — seeking to partner with God's perfect purposes to expand the boundaries of the Garden to the ends of the earth. In this manner, the two aspects of being made in the image of God (relational and vocational) are tied together.
 2. **Tabernacle of Moses:** This tabernacle was built according to pattern of the heavenly temple shown to Moses on the mountain. It was designed to show that the stewardship of the presence of the Lord in the tabernacle was meant to be the life source of Israel's national identity. Israel was intended to be a people called out, a kingdom of priests, who enjoyed and stewarded the presence of God in their midst through faithful obedience **for the sake** of the nations of the earth.
 3. **Tabernacle of David:** When David ascended to the throne, he brought the ark to Jerusalem established the order of musical Levites at the center of the life and worship.
 4. **Israel's Temple:** We see throughout the history of the temple (2 Chronicles), that it is not merely the place that matters to the Lord's purposes, but rather the expression of worship (seeking) that is intended to be at the center of God's people. This is demonstrated by the reality of Israel's successes and failures tied explicitly to their fidelity to the worship ordinances instituted by David at the temple.
 5. **The New Covenant:** In the new covenant, Jesus himself is the true tabernacle of God (John 1.14). In his life, death, resurrection, and ascension to the Father, he opens the way for those who are in him to be ushered into the presence of God. Now the church, by virtue of the work of Christ and the gift of the Spirit, are the temple of God in the earth. We are to live as a new kingdom of priests primarily by (1) offering him rightly ordered worship and prayer (agreement with him in the place of communion) and (2) expanding the boundaries of his kingdom to the ends of the earth (cf. Matt 28.18-20).
- D. The testimony of Scripture invites us to see that God desires to fill the earth with his glory. In the new covenant, the primary way through which this happens is the ministry of the church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, seeking to evangelize and disciple the nations.
- E. God releases more of the expression of his kingdom in the earth through worship and prayer. When we agree with who God has revealed himself to be and come before him with a spirit of faith to ask him to do what he has promised, he releases more of his grace, power, and manifest presence.
- F. This gives us insight into the nature of the building of the new temple (the people of God) as his dwelling place. At the heart of God's people is a call to live in a posture of agreement with him.
 1. **Worship:** when we agree with who God is (his person, his character, his attributes).
 2. **Prayer:** when we agree with what God has promised to accomplish (his purposes, his promises).