

2 Chronicles Chapter 2

Verses 1-18: This section reports how Solomon selected men to gather building materials for the temple. This was in addition to the massive supplies stockpiled by David (compare 1 Chron. Chapters 22 and 29). This section parallels (1 Kings 5:1-16).

2 Chronicles 2:1 "And Solomon determined to build a house for the name of the LORD, and an house for his kingdom."

"A house for the name of the Lord" God's covenant name, Yahweh or Jehovah (compare Exodus 3:14), is in mind. David wanted to do this, but was not allowed to do any more than plan and prepare (1 Chron. Chapters 23 to 26; 28:11-13), purchase the land (2 Sam. 24:18-25; 1 Chron. Chapter 22), and gather the materials (1 Chron. 22:14-16).

Solomon began to build in the fourth year of his reign (966 B.C.), and completed it seven years later (1 Kings chapter 6).

"A house" (see 1 Kings 7:1-12), for details of David's royal palace (compare 2 Chron. 7:11; 8:1).

Solomon is just like a brand-new Christian here. He is determined to do a fabulous work for the glory of the LORD. I like the word determined, because it means he would not be easily discouraged. He would drive on to accomplish the job God gave him to do. He had his priorities straight, because the house for the name of the LORD was mentioned first and then his own house.

2 Chronicles 2:2 "And Solomon told out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them."

These numbers are repeated (in 2:17-18). We see (1 Kings 5:16), records 3300 overseers, compared to 3600 (in 2:18). If, however, the additional supervisors (250 in 2 Chron. 8:10, but 550 in 1 Kings 9:23), are added, then both 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles agree that a total of 3850 men worked. David had done similarly at an earlier date (1 Chron. 22:2).

This is saying, that Solomon set 70,000 men aside for the task of carrying burdens. He set 80,000 men to cut the timber and shape it for the buildings. There were 3,600 men to oversee all of this work. Solomon would build a complex, along with building the temple.

Verses 3-10: Compare with the contents of (1 Kings 5:3-6). The differences can be accounted for in much the same way as in the Gospels, by combining the narratives of (1 Kings 5:3-6 and 2 Chron. 2:3-10), to complete the entire correspondence.

2 Chronicles 2:3 "And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him a house to dwell therein, [even so deal with me]."

When David built his palace, “Hiram king of Tyre” sent him workers and cedar from Lebanon (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Chron. 14:1). Hiram was king of a seaport city that was north of Jerusalem. He had his workers cut cedar logs and float them down the Mediterranean Sea to Joppa. From there workers took them inland to Jerusalem (1 Kings 5:8-9).

“Hiram” is another spelling of Hiram “of Tyre”.

(See the notes on 1 Kings 5:1 and 5:7-10).

Hiram is the same as Hiram. He had sent cedar for the home of David, and sent workers who were skilled in building with cedar. Solomon was sure that he would deal the same with him, as he did with his father David. David had sent grain to help them. It was not an exchange, but each sent the other a gift. Grain was plentiful in Israel, and Solomon would do the same.

2 Chronicles 2:4 "Behold, I build a house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate [it] to him, [and] to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual showbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This [is an ordinance] for ever to Israel."

Am about to do it, and determined upon it (see 2 Chron. 2:1).

"To dedicate it to him": To set it apart for sacred service to him.

"And to burn before him sweet incense": On the altar of incense.

"And for the continual showbread": The loaves of showbread, which were continually on the showbread table. And the altar of incense, both were set in the Holy Place in the tabernacle, and so to be in the temple.

"And for the burnt offerings morning and evening": The daily sacrifice. On the Sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the Lord our God. At which seasons, besides the daily sacrifice, additional burnt offerings were offered, and all on the brasen altar in the court. This is an ordinance,

"For ever unto Israel": To offer the above sacrifices, even for a long time to come, until the Messiah comes. And therefore Solomon suggests, as Jarchi and Kimchi think, that a good strong house ought to be built.

The burning of sweet incense symbolizes the prayers of the saints. The smoke and sweet smell rises to heaven like the prayers rise to heaven. The continual showbread is speaking of the twelve loaves that were always in the temple before the LORD. This bread is symbolic of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Bread. This also is symbolic of that bread that fell from heaven to feed the Israelites. Twelve is a representative number of the whole. The body of Jesus took care of all of us. He gave His body (Bread), on the cross, that all men might be saved. Every one of the offerings and sacrifices represent that one great sacrifice that Jesus made for us all. He fulfilled all of the law in that one act. The list of the times are special observances they made.

2 Chronicles 2:5 "And the house which I build [is] great: for great [is] our God above all gods."

Not so very large, though that with all apartments and courts belonging to it, he intended to build, was so. But because magnificent in its structure and decorations.

"For great is our God above all gods": And therefore, ought to have a temple to exceed all others, as the temple at Jerusalem did.

This is another way of saying, "Our God is God".

2 Samuel 7:22 "Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for [there is] none like thee, neither [is there any] God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears."

2 Chronicles 2:6 "But who is able to build him a house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who [am] I then, that I should build him a house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?"

Solomon's request to Hiram is accompanied by a witness as to the one true God. He will make the same point in his prayer of dedication at the time of the temple's completion (1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chron. 6:18).

The temple Solomon built to the LORD was the most magnificent house in the whole world at the time it was built. Even that was not enough to think that God would dwell there, because the world and everything in it, belongs to God. Even all the world could not contain God. The temple then, was built for man. It was a way man could try to convey his love for God. This was a point of contact for mortal man with his God. God is "omnipresent". He is everywhere all at the same time.

2 Chronicles 2:7 "Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that [are] with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide."

"Send me ... a man cunning": The Israelites were familiar with agriculture, but not metalworking. They needed experts for that.

He needs a man like Bezaleel, that God sent to Moses. He is really speaking of a supervisor, who can direct all of the work that must be done. There are men already provided to do the actual work, but this would have to be someone highly skilled to see the work is perfect.

2 Chronicles 2:8 "Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees, out of Lebanon: for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and, behold, my servants [shall be] with thy servants,"

"Algum": A coniferous tree native to Lebanon. Some identify it as sandalwood, a smooth, expensive red wood that could be polished to a high gloss.

Solomon was aware that Hiram's men were more skilled at working with their native woods, than his men were. He would send men to do much of the menial labor, but the men of Hiram would have to do things that were not known by Solomon's men.

2 Chronicles 2:9 "Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build [shall be] wonderful great."

Since he would want a large quantity for rafting, covering, wainscoting, and flooring the temple.

"For the house which I am about to build shall be wonderful great": as to its structure and ornaments.

There would be a vast amount of timber needed to build the temple, the palace and all of the buildings associated with them. There would not only have to be vast amounts, but huge individual trees as well. The temple that Solomon was attempting to build was far beyond anything that any of them had ever worked on before.

2 Chronicles 2:10 "And, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil."

Solomon's payments to Hiram and his workmen were substantial. The details given here supplement those of (1 Kings 5:11).

This listing of goods is more complete than that of (1 Kings 5:11). Lebanon traded with Israel regularly for food.

"Give ... twenty thousand measures": This is the same as a homer and could have measured as much as 7.5 bushels, making this amount about 150,000 bushels.

"And twenty thousand baths": The bath, a liquid measure, of six or seven gallons' capacity. The word "bath" occurs in the Greek of Luke 16:6-7. This would be about 120,000 gallons. The 20 measures of "pure oil" (in 1 Kings 5:11), is most likely not a scribal error but rather a finer grade of oil.

This would be very good news to the land of Hiram. They could not grow enough grain to feed their people. There had been a great shortage of this type of food in their land. Each measure of grain would be 32 pecks. The beaten wheat was wheat to make bread with. 20,000 measures would be 640,000 pecks of beaten wheat. The barley would also be 640,000 pecks. A bath is 7 gallons. This means they would give them 140,000 gallons of wine and 140,000 gallons of oil. The wine would be from the many vineyards in Israel, and the oil would be of the olive trees.

Verses 11-16: Compare with the context of (1 Kings 5:7-9).

2 Chronicles 2:11 "Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them."

This is a very complimentary letter to Solomon. It appears from this, that Hiram knew of the God of Israel. This would be the nicest thing a king could hear. When we live right, it sends a message to the unsaved around us. This was what Solomon had done here. Hiram realized this was because God had blessed Israel.

2 Chronicles 2:12 "Hiram said moreover, Blessed [be] the LORD God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build a house for the LORD, and a house for his kingdom."

“God ... that made heaven and earth”: This was the common identification of the true God when pagans spoke of or were told of Him. (compare 2 Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1:2; 5:11-12; 6:10; 7:12, 21, 23; Jer. 10:11-12; Acts 4:24; 14:15; 17:24-26; Col. 1:16-17; Rev. 11:1, 6).

Although he was not an Israelite, Hiram willingly helped Solomon build a temple for God. The king seemed to revere “the Lord God of Israel”, at least in part because Solomon was such a wise king (1 Kings 5-7). When others see our reverence for God, they may also come to revere Him as well.

Hiram or Hiram as he was better known, had been a close friend of king David. He was pleased to know that God had sent a son to David to carry out the building of the temple, which David had so greatly desired to do. Again, it was the LORD God of Israel who brought this all about. Solomon would do the work that David had in his heart to do. Hiram was pleased with Solomon's desire to accomplish this.

Verses 13-14: “Hiram”: (1 Kings 7:14), states that his mother was of the tribe of Naphtali, not Dan, as reported here. This is resolved if she was of Naphtali by birth, but living in the territory of Dan. Or, if his parents were originally from the two tribes, then he could legitimately claim either. He was the parallel to Bezalel, who constructed the tabernacle (see note on 2 Chron. 1:5).

2 Chronicles 2:13 "And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's,"

The people of Israel were experts in areas of agriculture but not in working with “gold and in silver, in brass, in iron”. So Hiram graciously sent them a “cunning man”, who was a skillful man, “endued with understanding”. This craftsman resembles Oholiab, one of the tabernacle craftsmen, in genealogy and skill (Exodus 35:34-35), highlighting a thread running through God’s work for the tabernacle to the temple.

The words “Hiram my father’s” may best be understood as one word giving the name and status of King Hiram’s master craftsman, Hiram-abi. The compound name thus signifies that this Hiram is a valued member of the royal team and a skilled workman. The title “my father” was used of Elijah (2 Kings 2:12), and Elisha (2 Kings 13:14).

2 Chronicles 2:14 "The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father [was] a man of Tyre, skillful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and

to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father."

Hiram's work was extensive, being concerned with the two pillars (Jachin and Boaz, 3:15-17; see the note on 1 Kings 7:15-22), the brazen altar (4:1), the molten sea with its bases (4:2-5, 10, 15), and the 10 lavers with their bases (4:6; see the note on 1 Kings 7:23-39), as well as certain brass utensils (4:11, 16), and golden articles (4:7-8, 19-22). His work was indeed an invaluable contribution.

It appears that this very skilled worker was of a father of Tyre, and a mother who was of the tribe of Dan. It was not unusual for these marriages between the Hebrews and other nations to take place. There was quite a bit of exchange between them in fact. He was probably an engraver, who worked with all of these things. Tyre was well known for the beautiful handwork they did in all of these things. If he was the best in their land, then he was very skilled.

2 Chronicles 2:15 "Now therefore the wheat, and the barley, the oil, and the wine, which my lord hath spoken of, let him send unto his servants:"

In his letter to him (2 Chron. 2:10). As for the phrase "my lord", which some think is used, because Hiram was tributary to Solomon, it may only be a respectful way of speaking.

"Let him send unto his servants": Hiram accepted thereof as a proper reward for the work of his servants.

Probably the need for the food was immediate in their land. He was asking Solomon to go ahead and send it. He would immediately start on the work Solomon had asked them to do as well.

2 Chronicles 2:16 "And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need: and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to Joppa; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem."

"Joppa": A major coastal port of Israel. Later, Jonah would sail from Joppa (Jonah 1:3), and much later Peter would be there to receive God's call in a vision (Acts 10:5).

Even today, logs are moved by letting them float in water to their destination. Joppa was a wellknown port. It was known for its beautiful groves. The logs would be floated to Joppa, and the Israelites would be responsible for carrying them overland to Jerusalem, which was about 34 miles. There were thousands of men responsible for bearing burdens, in fact 70,000 men. This would be no problem then, if they could get the logs to Joppa.

Verses 17-18: Although Solomon used "strangers" (descendants of the pagan nations Israel had conquered), to help build the temple, he no doubt knew the law of God about how to treat them (Lev. 25:39-55).

(See the notes on 1 Kings 5:13-14 and 5:15-16).

2 Chronicles 2:17 "And Solomon numbered all the strangers that [were] in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found a hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred."

Which, according to Kimchi, were the remains of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, and Jebusites (see 2 Chron. 8:8). Yet not idolaters, or they would not have been suffered by David and Solomon to have dwelt in the land. Such as become proselytes of the gate (see note on 2 Chron. 2:2).

"After the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them": Not at the time Israel was numbered by him, but in order to provide workmen for the building of the temple (1 Chron. 22:2).

"And they were found a hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred": Men able to bear burdens, and hew timber.

These strangers were there working on the building projects. There were 153,600 strangers in the land. They were mostly from Tyre. Many of them were engravers and those who carved wood.

2 Chronicles 2:18 "And he set threescore and ten thousand of them [to be] bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand [to be] hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people a work."

Literally, and he made seventy thousand of them bearers of burdens, and eighty thousand hewers in the mountains. This exactly agrees with (1 Kings 5:15).

"And three thousand and six hundred overseers": The same number was given in (2 Chron. 2:2). In (1 Kings 5:16), we read of 3,300 officers. In the Hebrew, three (shālôsh) and six (shêsh) might easily be confused; our reading appears right. The chronicler omits all notice of the levy of 30,000 Israelites, which the parallel passage records (1 Kings 5:13-14). Whether by an oversight, or from disapproval, we cannot say. Adding that number to the 70,000 and 80,000 other laborers, we get a grand total of 180,000, which gives a company of 50 for each of the 3,600 overseers.

"Overseers": It is the plural of a participle which occurs only in the titles of the Psalms (including Hab. 3:19). While the verb is read only in (Chron. and Ezra 3:8-9; see note on 1 Chron. 15:21).

"To set the people a work": Or, "to set the people to work". I. e., to compel them to labor. Probably, like the Egyptian and Assyrian overseers of forced labor, these officers carried whips or sticks, with which they quickened the movements of the sluggish.

This is a repetition of the first verses of this lesson. There were 70,000 burden bearers. There were 80,000 men cutting wood in the mountains. The 3,600 men were overseers.

2 Chronicles Chapter 2 Questions

1. What had Solomon determined to do?

2. How many men would be burden bearers?
3. How many men would cut timber?
4. How many overseers would there be?
5. Hiram is the same as _____.
6. What had Hiram done for David?
7. What had David done to help Hiram?
8. What did Solomon say was the purpose for the house built to the name of the LORD?
9. What does the burning of sweet incense symbolize?
10. The continual showbread is speaking of what?
11. Twelve is a _____ number of the whole.
12. Who was the true Bread?
13. What were some of the special observances?
14. Verse 5 is another way of saying what?
15. Why could the temple Solomon built not hold God?
16. In verse 7, Solomon is asking for what type of man?
17. Why would they need so vast a supply of timber?
18. How much beaten wheat would Solomon send in return?
19. How large is a measure?
20. How many pecks of wheat was sent then?
21. How much barley was sent?
22. A bath is _____ gallons.
23. How many gallons of wine did Solomon send them?
24. How much oil did he send them?
25. How did Hiram answer Solomon's offer?
26. Who was the mother of the cunning man, that Hiram sent to Solomon?

27. Why did Hiram ask Solomon to go ahead and send the food?
28. How are large logs moved from place to place?
29. How many strangers were in the land, when Solomon numbered them?