

## LESSON TEN 21-22

### A MILITARY CENSUS AND A PLAGUE

#### 13. DAVID'S MILITARY CENSUS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES (Chapter 21)

##### INTRODUCTION

The final serious mistake David made was this military census. God did not withhold judgment. Israel suffered. David repented and begged for God's mercy. Preparing for the building of the Temple and charging Solomon with the responsibility of carrying out the plans occupied king David's last days.

##### TEXT

Chapter 21:1. And Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel. 2. And David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beer-sheba even to Dan; and bring me word, that I may know the sum of them." 3. And Joab said, "Jehovah make his people a hundred times as many as they are: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants; Why doth my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of guilt unto Israel?" 4. Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem. 5. And Joab gave up the sum of the numbering of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and a hundred thousand men that drew sword; and Judah was four hundred three score and ten thousand men that drew sword. 6. But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them; for the king's word was abominable to Joab. 7. And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel. 8. And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, in that I have done this thing: but now put away, I beseech thee, the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

9. And Jehovah spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying, 10. Go and speak unto David, saying, "Thus saith Jehovah, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee". 11. So Gad came to David, and said unto him,

"Thus saith Jehovah, Take which thou wilt: 12. either three years of famine; or three months to be consumed before thy foes, while the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of Jehovah, even pestilence in the land, and the angel of Jehovah destroying throughout all the borders of Israel. Now therefore consider what answer I shall return to him that sent me." 13. And David said unto Gad, "I am in a great strait: let me fall, I pray, into the hand of Jehovah; for very great are his mercies: and let me not fall into the hand of man." 14. So Jehovah sent a pestilence upon Israel; and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. 15. And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was about to destroy, Jehovah beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the destroying angel, "It is enough; now stay thy hand." And the angel of Jehovah was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 16. And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of Jehovah standing between earth and heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. 17. And David said unto God, "Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done very wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done; Let thy hand, I pray thee, O Jehovah my God, be against me, and against my father's house; but not against thy people, that they should be plagued."

18. Then the angel of Jehovah commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and rear an altar unto Jehovah in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 19. And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of Jehovah. 20. And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel; and his four sons that were with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat. 21. And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshing-floor, and bowed himself to David with his face to the ground. 22. Then David said to Ornan, "Give me the place of this threshing-floor, that I may build thereon an altar unto Jehovah: for the full price shalt thou give it me, that the plague may be stayed from

the people." 23. And Ornan said unto David, "Take it to thee, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes: lo, I give thee the oxen for burnt-offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meal-offering; I give it all." 24. And king David said to Ornan, "Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is thine for Jehovah, nor offer a burnt-offering without cost." 25. So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. 26. And David built there an altar unto Jehovah, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon Jehovah; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burn-offering. 27. And Jehovah commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.

28. At that time, when David saw that Jehovah had answered him in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. 29. For the tabernacle of Jehovah, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt-offering, were at that time in the high place at Gibeon. 30. But David could not go before it to inquire of God; for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of Jehovah.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 21:1. Then Satan brought disaster upon Israel, for he made David decide to take a census. 2. "Take a complete census throughout the land and bring me the totals," he told Joab and the other leaders. 3. But Joab objected. "If the Lord were to multiply his people a hundred times, would they not all be yours? So why are you asking us to do this? Why must you cause Israel to sin?" 4. But the king won the argument, and Joab did as he was told; he traveled all through Israel and returned to Jerusalem. 5. The total population figure which he gave came to 1,100,000 men of military age in Israel and 470,000 in Judah. 6. But he didn't include the tribes of Levi and Benjamin in his figures because he was so distressed at what the king had made him do. 7. And God, too, was displeased with the census and punished Israel for it. 8. But David said to God, "I am the one who has sinned. Please forgive me, for I

realize now how wrong I was to do this.”

9. Then the Lord said to Gad, David's personal prophet, 10, 11. “Go and tell David, ‘The Lord has offered you three choices. Which will you choose? 12. You may have three years of famine, or three months of destruction by the enemies of Israel, or three days of deadly plague as the angel of the Lord brings destruction to the land. Think it over and let me know what answer to return to the one who sent me.’” 13. “This is a terrible decision to make,” David replied, “but let me fall into the hands of the Lord rather than into the power of men, for God's mercies are very great.” 14. So the Lord sent a plague upon Israel and 70,000 men died as a result. 15. During the plague God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem; but then he felt such compassion that he changed his mind and commanded the destroying angel, “Stop! It is enough!” (The angel of the Lord was standing at the time by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.) 16. When David saw the angel of the Lord standing between heaven and earth with his sword drawn, pointing toward Jerusalem, he and the elders of Israel clothed themselves in sackcloth and fell to the ground before the Lord. 17. And David said to God, “I am the one who sinned by ordering the census. But what have these sheep done? O Lord my God, destroy me and my family, but do not destroy your people.”

18. Then the angel of the Lord told Gad to instruct David to build an altar to the Lord at the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 19,20. So David went to see Ornan, who was threshing wheat at the time. Ornan saw the angel as he turned, and his four sons ran and hid. 21. Then Ornan saw the king approaching. So he left the threshing-floor and bowed to the ground before King David. 22. David said to Ornan, “Let me buy this threshing-floor from you at its full price; then I will build an altar to the Lord and the plague will stop.” 23. “Take it, my lord, and use it as you wish,” Ornan said to David. “Take the oxen, too, for the wheat for the grain offering. I give it all to you.” 24. “No,” the king replied, “I will buy it for the full price; I cannot take what is yours and give it to the Lord. I will not offer a burnt offering that has cost me nothing!” 25. So

David paid Ornan \$4,300 in gold, 26. and built an altar to the Lord there, and sacrificed burnt offerings and peace offerings upon it; and he called out to the Lord, who answered by sending down fire from heaven to burn up the offering on the altar. 27. Then the Lord commanded the angel to put back his sword into its sheath;

28. and when David saw that the Lord had answered his plea, he sacrificed to him again. 29. The Tabernacle and altar made by Moses in the wilderness were on the hill of Gibeon, 30. but David didn't have time to go there to plead before the Lord, for he was terrified by the drawn sword of the angel of Jehovah.

### COMMENTARY

Chapter twenty-one describes another sin in David's life. Why his sin with Bathsheba is omitted in Chronicles and why this account of the sin in the military census is included are matters not explained in the Bible. The particulars of the military census are detailed in verses 1-8. The parallel account is recorded in II Samuel 24:1-25. The record in Samuel says that "the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them" (24:1). The chronicler says (I Chronicles 21:1) that "Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel." The king in the later years of his reign stubbornly insisted that a numbering of the warriors be done even though it was unnecessary and contrary to Jehovah's will. As in the matter when David sinned with Bathsheba, so David permitted Satan to have control of his life. The results were disastrous. Every indication pointed to a military census of Israel as we consider the kind of numbering that was to be done. Chapter 27 in I Chronicles describes the careful organization of David's army. When he set up twelve courses of warriors, one for each month of the year, for special duties, he was careful not to number those under twenty years of age (27:23). Joab was the chief military captain. He and the princes of each tribe were charged with this responsibility. The whole procedure had to do with the military establishment. The project involved an extensive review and description of Israel's

total manpower. All of the territory from Dan to Beersheba had to be traversed. David was quite old at this time. Israel's wars under his leadership were past. What he ordered with regard to this census could have no real motive other than that of self-congratulation. The whole matter was contrary to Jehovah's will. Joab saw through David's problem in this matter and at great personal risk dared to hesitate to do what David had appointed. Joab warned that David would bring Jehovah's judgment on Israel by this act. Satan was powerful. David would not be denied. The census probably could have been completed in a relatively short time. Joab and the princes gave some attention to the assignment and after nine months and twenty days (II Samuel 24:8) reported to David in Jerusalem. The census takers had gone across the Jordan river through the Gilead country to Tyre and turning south they journeyed to Beersheba. In numbering all of Israel except the tribe of Judah, one million one hundred and ten thousand warriors were counted. In addition to these, four hundred and seventy thousand warriors of Judah were numbered. The Levites were not numbered. This had been characteristic of the earlier censuses. The tribe of Benjamin was not included simply because Joab was unhappy with his assignment.<sup>1</sup> The total number of warriors amounted to one million five hundred and seventy thousand. After the numbering had been done, David began to think clearly about his motives. His own conscience condemned him and Jehovah used the prophet, Gad, to bring David to his senses. David, like other great leaders of Israel, was capable of terrible sins. He also, like Moses and Aaron, had unusual ability to experience genuine repentance. David said, "I have sinned greatly". "I have done foolishly." He pleaded for Jehovah's forgiveness. He humbled himself. No longer was he a selfish, stubborn king; he would be "Jehovah's servant".

The rest of the chapter (verses 9-30) describes Jehovah's judgment on David and Israel. Gad was David's personal spiritual adviser. He had been with David (I Samuel 22:5) in the wilderness of Judah when David was hiding from Saul. He was

<sup>1</sup>Schaff, Philip, *Lange's Commentary, Chronicles*, p. 132.

an historian of the life of David (I Chronicles 29:29). Jehovah used Gad on this occasion to inform David with regard to Jehovah's judgment on his sin. In a rare action Jehovah through Gad laid before David three terrible penalties from among which David had to choose one. The penalties were (1) three years of famine, (2) three months of military reverses at the hand of Israel's enemies, (3) three days of the sword of Jehovah which would include an awful pestilence. These three choices were only a suggestion of the vast numbers and kinds of trouble which Jehovah could unleash upon those who disobey Him. Jehovah's mercy cannot be weighed. He is also the God of wrath. When David had been charged to make a choice, he found himself cornered by the Lord. He faced the most tragic dilemma of his life. Which choice would be best for him and for his people? Famine, military defeat, and the deadly pestilence had not been known in Israel in David's day. David was the one who had sinned. Which of the choices would bring the least amount of suffering on Israel and cause David himself to bear the weight of the judgment? David admitted his predicament. "I am in a great straight." He did not choose any one of the three possibilities. Instead, he humbly submitted himself to God. He preferred to "fall into Jehovah's hand" and not into "the hand of man". He trusted Jehovah's mercy. He made the best choice. Jehovah sent the deadly pestilence. The tenth plague visited upon the Egyptians in Moses' day bears many similarities to this death. Before proper intercession was made, seventy thousand Hebrews died because of this pestilence. The trouble moved toward Jerusalem. Many had already died and the lives of David and his family were seriously threatened. Jehovah intervened. "It is enough", God said. The angel in charge of the judgment stood by the threshing floor of Ornan (Araunah) the Jebusite. The Jebusites were original inhabitants of Jerusalem. Jehovah permitted David to see the angel suspended between earth and heaven and holding the sword in a threatening manner. Sackcloth was a symbol of mourning. David and the elders prostrated themselves on the ground pleading for Israel. David's heart was broken because so many Israelites (sheep) had

died. He, alone, had been responsible for the sin. He pleaded with God to judge him and to spare the people.

At the angel's direction Gad told David what to do. The threshing floor most likely was located on Mount Moriah in the eastern sector of Jerusalem. An altar was to be built on the threshing floor. In typical oriental fashion David bargained with Ornan for the threshing floor. David said he would pay the full price. Ornan said he would give it to David. Abraham was involved in a similar experience when he secured a burial place for Sarah (Genesis 23:9). Ornan intended to get the full price for his property. David revealed an important key to worship when he said he would not present to Jehovah any offering which did not cost him something. This is the essence of genuine worship. Hebrews could not offer a fish to God on the altar of burnt offering. No human labor or investment was required to produce the fish. Jehovah freely accepted lambs, goats, and bullocks as sacrificial materials because those who offered these kinds of sacrifices had labored over them for this purpose. When a shepherd offered a lamb, he also offered something of himself. David knew that a burnt offering and a peace offering had to be lifted up before Jehovah immediately if the plague was to be arrested. So he bought the site where he set up the altar. This altar would have been formed out of natural rock on which no tool had been used. David paid Ornan six hundred shekels of gold (perhaps about 6,000 dollars). Under normal conditions this would have been a very high price. As the offerings were on the altar and the smoke and fire ascended, the angel sheathed his sword. God's wrath was turned. David's house and the people of Jerusalem were spared. After such a wonderful experience on Mount Moriah, David often returned to that place to worship Jehovah. The Temple had not yet been built. The tabernacle was at Gibeon which was located in Benjamin about eight miles north of Jerusalem. The fear of Jehovah kept David from going to Gibeon. The angel's sword, as had been the case with Balaam (Numbers 22:31), made a deep impression on David. To "inquire of God" meant to seek God's will. Priests and prophets often assisted in this



matter. David's declaration in 22:1 accounts for the choice of this site for Solomon's Temple. "This is the house of Jehovah" and "this is the altar of burnt offering" came to be regarded as historic declarations.

#### 14. DAVID'S PROVISIONS FOR THE TEMPLE

(Chapter 22)

##### TEXT

Chapter 22:1. Then David said, "This is the house of Jehovah God, and this is the altar of burnt-offering for Israel."

2. And David commanded to gather together the sojourners that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God. 3. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the couplings; and brass in abundance without weight; 4. and cedar-trees without number: for the Sidonians and they of Tyre brought cedar-trees in abundance to David. 5. And David said, "Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for Jehovah must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore make preparation for it". So David prepared abundantly before his death.

6. Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build a house for Jehovah, the God of Israel. 7. And David said to Solomon his son, "As for me, it was in my heart to build a house unto the name of Jehovah my God. 8. But the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, 'Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. 9. 'Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. 10. 'He shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.' 11. "Now, my son, Jehovah be with thee; and prosper thou, and

build the house of Jehovah thy God, as he hath spoken concerning thee. 12. "Only Jehovah give thee discretion and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel; that so thou mayest keep the law of Jehovah thy God. 13. "Then shalt thou prosper, if thou observe to do the statutes and the ordinances which Jehovah charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; fear not, neither be dismayed. 14. "Now, behold, in my affliction I have prepared for the house of Jehovah a hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver, and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto. 15. "Moreover there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all men that are skilful in every manner of work: 16. "Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise and be doing, and Jehovah be with thee."

17. David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, saying, 18. "Is not Jehovah your God with you? and hath he not given you rest on every side? For he hath delivered the inhabitants of the land into my hand; and the land is subdued before Jehovah, and before his people. 19. Now set your heart and your soul to seek after Jehovah your God; arise therefore, and build ye the sanctuary God, into the house that is to be built to the name of Jehovah."

#### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 22:1. Then David said, "Right here at Ornan's threshing-floor is the place where I'll build the Temple of the Lord and construct the altar for Israel's burnt offering!"

2. David now drafted all the resident aliens in Israel to prepare blocks of squared stone for the Temple. 3. They also manufactured iron into the great quantity of nails needed for the doors in the gates and for the clamps; and they smelted so much bronze that it was too much to weigh. 4. The men of Tyre and Sidon brought great rafts of cedar logs to David. 5. "Solomon my son is young and tender," David said, "and the

Temple of the Lord must be a marvelous structure, famous and glorious throughout the world; so I will begin the preparations for it now." So David collected the construction materials before his death.

6. He now commanded his son Solomon to build a temple for the Lord God of Israel. 7. "I wanted to build it myself," David told him, 8. "but the Lord said not to do it. 'You have killed too many men in great wars,' he told me. 'You have reddened the ground before me with blood: so you are not to build my Temple. 9. But I will give you a son,' he told me, 'who will be a man of peace, for I will give him peace with his enemies in the surrounding lands. His name shall be Solomon (meaning "Peaceful"), and I will give peace and quietness to Israel during his reign. 10. He shall build my temple, and he shall be as my own son and I will be his father; and I will cause his sons and his descendants to reign over every generation of Israel.' 11. "So now, my son, may the Lord be with you and prosper you as you do what he told you to do and build the Temple of the Lord. 12. And may the Lord give you the good judgment to follow all his laws when he makes you king of Israel. 13. For if you carefully obey the rules and regulations which he gave to Israel through Moses, you will prosper. Be strong and courageous, fearless and enthusiastic! 14. "By hard work I have collected \$3,000,000,000 worth of gold bullion, \$2,000,000 worth of silver, and so much iron and bronze that I haven't even weighed it; I have also gathered timber and stone for the walls. This is at least a beginning, something with which to start. 15. And you have many skilled stonemasons and carpenters and craftsmen of every kind. 16. They are expert gold and silver smiths and bronze and iron workers. So get to work, and may the Lord be with you!" 17. Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to assist his son in this project. 18. "The Lord your God is with you," he declared. "He has given you peace with the surrounding nations, for I have conquered them in the name of the Lord and for his people. 19. Now try with every fiber of your being to obey the Lord your God, and you will soon be bringing the Ark and the other holy articles of

worship into the Temple of the Lord!"

### COMMENTARY

Chapter twenty-two describes plans made for the Temple. This was a primary concern for David in the latter years of his reign. The expanding kingdom of Israel brought many foreigners to Jerusalem. Some of these became proselytes or converts to Israel's religion. Others of them simply brought their skills as master workmen and found ready employment under David and Solomon. This provided an interesting preview of the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's kingdom. Men skilled in building with stone and marble, men who were master craftsmen in using copper, and others who were skilled workmen with wood came to David's assistance. Great marble slabs were prepared for the Temple. Some of these measured twelve by fifteen feet and weighed as much as five tons. These stones were quarried in Phoenicia not far from the great Lebanon forests. Some marble was quarried in the Jordan valley. All of the great stones were hewn to specific dimensions where they were quarried so that no sound of hammers was heard at the building site of the Temple. The Phoenicians from Tyre and Sidon were master craftsmen in wood. They were expert builders of ships and houses. The great cedar logs and marble slabs were floated down the Mediterranean on wood rafts. David knew that Solomon was to build the Temple. Solomon would need much assistance if the House was to approach the magnificance which David envisioned. "So David prepared abundantly before his death." To prepare for the Temple became David's chief concern.

In verses six through sixteen David spoke directly to Solomon emphasizing his successor's responsibility with regard to the construction of the Temple. Solomon's specific charge was "to build a house for Jehovah". David once again recalled his purpose to build the Temple and Jehovah's forbidding him to do so. Because of the peculiar responsibilities which were David's he had been a man of war. The blood of many persons was upon his hands. Before Solomon was born, David had

known what his son's name and character would be. The name, Solomon, means "peaceful". He would be a "man of rest". In quietness and confidence he would do his work as king. Not only was Solomon the son of David, he was also the son of God. As Jehovah had revealed in II Samuel, chapter 7, Solomon would be the first successor of David in the establishment of the Davidic kingship. So David charged Solomon with solemn responsibility and prayed for Jehovah's richest blessings to attend his son. "Discretion" is that ability to make the right choices. "Understanding" is more than mere intelligence. It involves comprehension, sympathy, sensitivity to God's revelation and man's needs. To "keep the law" involved careful study of Jehovah's revealed will and courage to be a real spiritual leader. Solomon would receive the crown in one hand. Into his other hand the scrolls of the Law would be placed on his coronation day. As Moses had led God's people out of Egypt to the Plains of Moab, Solomon is to lead in strength and without fear or dismay. David reminded his son, Solomon, that he had prepared a great stockpile of materials for the construction of the Temple. When constructed, the materials used in the building of the Temple were so lavish that their value could not be estimated.<sup>1</sup> One hundred thousand talents of gold at thirty thousand dollars a talent would amount to three hundred million dollars. One million talents of silver at two thousand dollars a talent would amount to two million dollars. It is best to say that the building would be of inestimable value. Not only did Solomon have all of the goods at his disposal, he also had unlimited resources in the skilled artisans and men who would do the menial tasks. David had done everything humanly possible to assure the grand success of this project. His charge was equal to the solemnity of the occasion, "Arise and be doing and Jehovah be with thee". David charged the princes to assist Solomon. The wars had been fought, enemies had either surrendered or had been annihilated. To the princes David said, "Arise and build the sanctuary of Jehovah God. Prepare a

<sup>1</sup>Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, p. 419

permanent place for the ark”.<sup>1</sup>

## SUMMARY QUESTIONS

### LESSON TEN 21—22

307. Why did David decide to take a census at this time?
308. What is the meaning of name “Satan”?
309. Why was Joab given this assignment?
310. Carefully locate Dan and Beersheba and state the distance separating these places.
311. Why was Joab hesitant to obey the king?
312. How could David be a “cause of guilt” in this matter?
313. To what city did Joab finally come with his report?
314. How many Israelites were counted?
315. How many of Judah were counted?
316. On what basis would the Levites be excluded from this census?
317. Why was the tribe of Benjamin passed over?
318. How did David come to the realization that he had sinned?
319. Who announced to David the alternatives with regard to Jehovah’s judgment?
320. State the choices presented to David.
321. Finally, what choice did David make? Explain his wisdom in this matter.
322. How many of the Hebrew people perished as a result of David’s census?
323. Why was the angel coming to Jerusalem and what would have been the consequences?
324. Why would Jehovah repent?
325. Describe what David saw according to 21:16. Relate this to a vision once granted to Daniel.
326. Why wear sackcloth?
327. Why would David refer to the people as sheep?
328. Explain David’s actions in building an altar.
329. Who was Ornan?

<sup>1</sup>Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 620

- 330. How did David propose to obtain the right to use the threshing floor?
- 331. What did Ornan offer to "give" David?
- 332. Explain the important principle involved in 21:24.
- 333. About how much is a shekel of gold worth?
- 334. What kind of offerings did David present to Jehovah?
- 335. What did the angel do?
- 336. Where was the tabernacle located at this time?
- 337. David was a fearless warrior, however what are we told in 21:30?
- 338. What is the essential meaning of the burnt offering?
- 339. Explain the nature of the work assigned to the masons.
- 340. Summarize the building materials which David collected and stored.
- 341. How did the Sidonians help in David's program? Where was Sidon located?
- 342. What kind of Temple did David hope would be built?
- 343. Why was David not permitted to build the Temple?
- 344. Explain the meaning of the name "Solomon".
- 345. What would be the nature of Solomon's reign?
- 346. What specific matters did David mention in his charge to Solomon?
- 347. To what promise does David refer in 22:10?
- 348. How was it that the princes of Israel now could give full attention to the Temple?
- 349. What was to be housed in the Temple?
- 350. What does it mean "to build to the name of Jehovah"?

## LESSON ELEVEN 23-24

### THE LEVITES AND THEIR DUTIES

#### 15. THE LEVITES AND THEIR WORK (Chapter 23)

##### INTRODUCTION

The successful functioning of the Temple required a careful organization of the priesthood. All of the Levites were appointed special assignments with regard to the Temple.

##### TEXT

Chapter 23:1. Now David was old and full of days; and he made Solomon his son king over Israel. 2. And he gathered together all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites. 3. And the Levites were numbered from thirty years old and upward; and their number by their polls, man by man, was thirty and eight thousand. 4. Of these, twenty and four thousand were to oversee the work of the house of Jehovah; and six thousand were officers and judges; 5. and four thousand were doorkeepers; and four thousand praised Jehovah with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith. 6. And David divided them into courses according to the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

7. Of the Gershonites: Ladan and Shimei. 8. The sons of Ladan: Jehiel the chief, and Zetham, and Joel, three. 9. The sons of Shimei: Shelomoth, and Haziel, and Haran, three. These were the heads of the fathers' house of Ladan. 10. And the sons of Shimei: Jahath, Zina, and Jeush, and Beriah. These four were the sons of Shimei. 11. And Jahath was the chief, and Zizah the second; but Jeush and Beriah had not many sons; therefore they became a fathers' house in reckoning.

12. The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four. 13. The sons of Amram: Aaron and Moses; and Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons, forever, to burn incense before Jehovah, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name forever. 14. But as for Moses the man of God, his sons were named among the tribe of Levi. 15. The sons of Moses: Gershom and Eliezer. 16. The sons of



Gershon: Shebuel the chief. 17. And the sons of Eliezer were: Rehabiah the chief; and Eliezer had no other sons; but the sons of Rehabiah were very many. 18. The sons of Izhar: Shelomith the chief. 19. The sons of Hebron: Jeriah the chief, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth. 20. The sons of Uzziel: Micah the chief, and Isshiah the second.

21. The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli: Eleazar and Kish. 22. And Eleazar died, and had no sons, but daughters only: and their brethren Kish took them to wife. 23. The sons of Mushi: Mahli, and Eder and Jeremoth, three.

24. There were the sons of Levi after their fathers' houses, even the heads of the fathers' houses of those of them that were counted, in the number of names by their polls, who did the work for the service of the house of Jehovah, from twenty years old and upward. 25. For David said, Jehovah, the God of Israel, hath given rest unto his people; and he dwelleth in Jerusalem for ever: 26. and also the Levites shall no more have need to carry the tabernacle and all the vessels of it for the service thereof. 27. For by the last words of David the sons of Levi were numbered, from twenty years old and upward. 28. For their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of Jehovah, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, even the work of the service of the house of God; 29. for the showbread also, and for the fine flour for a meal-offering, whether of unleavened wafers, or of that which is baked in the pan, or of that which is soaked, and for all manner of measure and size; 30. and to stand every morning to thank and praise Jehovah, and likewise at even; 31. and to offer all burnt-offerings unto Jehovah, on the sabbaths, on the new moons, and on the set feasts, in number according to the ordinance concerning them, continually before Jehovah; 32. and that they should keep the charge of the tent of meeting, and the charge of the holy place, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, for the service of the house of Jehovah.

#### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 23:1. By this time David was an old, old man, so he

stepped down from the throne and appointed his son Solomon as the new king of Israel. 2. He summoned all the political and religious leaders of Israel for the coronation ceremony. 3. At this time a census was taken of the men of the tribe of Levi who were thirty years or older. The total came to 38,000. 4,5. "Twenty-four thousand of them will supervise the work at the Temple," David instructed, "six thousand are to be bailiffs and judges, four thousand will be temple guards, and four thousand will praise the Lord with the musical instruments I have made." 6. Then David divided them into three main divisions named after the sons of Levi—the Gershom division, the Kohath division and the Merari division.

7. Subdivisions of the Gershom corps were named after his sons Ladan and Shime-i. 8, 9. These subdivisions were still further divided into six groups named after the sons of Ladan: Jehiel the leader, Zetham, Joel; and the sons of Shime-i—Shelomoth, Hazei, and Haran. 10, 11. The subclans of Shime-i were named after his four sons: Jahath was greatest, Zizah was next, and Jeush and Beriah were combined into a single subclan because neither had many sons.

12. The division of Kohath was subdivided into four groups named after his sons Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 13. Amram was the ancestor of Aaron and Moses. Aaron and his sons were set apart for the holy service of sacrificing the people's offerings to the Lord. He served the Lord constantly and pronounced blessings in his name at all times. 14, 15. As for Moses, the man of God, his sons Gershom and Eliezer were included with the tribe of Levi. 16. Gershom's sons were led by Shebuel, 17. and Eliezer's only son, Rehabiah, was the leader of his clan for he had many children. 18. The sons of Izhar were led by Shelomith. 19. The sons of Hebron were led by Jeriah. Amariah was second in command, Jahaziel was third, and Jekameam was fourth. 20. The sons of Uzziel were led by Micah, and Isshiah was the second in command.

21. The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli were Eleazar and Kish. 22. Eleazar died without any sons, and his daughters were married to their cousins, the sons of

Kish. 23. Mushi's sons were Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth.

24. In the census, all the men of Levi who were twenty years old or older were classified under the names of these clans and subclans; and they were all assigned to the ministry at the Temple. 25. For David said, "The Lord God of Israel has given us peace, and he will always live in Jerusalem. 26. Now the Levites will no longer need to carry the Tabernacle and its instruments from place to place." 27. (This census of the tribe of Levi was one of the last things David did before his death.) 28. The work of the Levites was to assist the priests—the descendants of Aaron—in the sacrifices at the Temple; they also did the custodial work and helped perform the ceremonies of purification. 29. They provided the Bread of the Presence, the flour for the grain offerings, and the wafers made without yeast (either fried or mixed with olive oil); they also checked all the weights and measures. 30. Each morning and evening they stood before the Lord to sing thanks and praise to him. 31. They assisted in the special sacrifices of burnt offerings, the Sabbath sacrifices, the new moon celebrations, and at all the festivals. There were always as many Levites present as they required for the occasion. 32. And they took care of the Tabernacle and the Temple and assisted the priests in whatever way they were needed.

### COMMENTARY

A further proof that David was deeply concerned about the Temple is evident in his careful organization of the Levites with respect to their Temple duties. When David became very old and his health failed, he proclaimed Solomon to be king in his place. David's son, Adonijah, forced his hand in this matter (I Kings, chapter 1). The military census which Joab had taken did not include the Levites. It was necessary that a careful count of this tribe be made so proper work assignments could be given. The Levite males thirty years of age and older were counted. There were thirty eight thousand. Twenty four thousand had assigned responsibility with regard to the Temple. Six thousand would serve as officers and judges. The officers were overseers

of work outside the Temple which pertained to the functioning of the Temple. The Levitical judges had responsibility in those matters which had to do with decisions pertaining to the Temple. The doorkeepers would be charged with the security of the Temple. Four thousand Levites had charge of the musical instruments such as harps and cymbals as these would be used in Temple services. The census would indicate the particular Levitical family to which each Levite belonged. Responsibilities were assigned which agreed with the kind of service that the Kohathite, Gershonite, or Merarite could perform. Verses 7-11 name certain leaders of the Gershonite family. Nine households were counted. Three of these belonged to Shimei and six belonged to Ladan (Libni). In Moses' day the Gershonites had charge of the tent materials in the moving of the Tabernacle. Now they were appointed other tasks relating to services at the Temple. Verses 12-20 concern the Kohathites. Kohath, Levi's son, had four sons. Amram was the father of Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. Aaron's "separation" or selection for the high priesthood was an important event in Israel's history. His responsibilities were "to sanctify the most holy things", to regard Jehovah's appointments in the tabernacle as most sacred; "to burn incense before Jehovah", the sweet odor of dutiful service, the symbol of prayer; "to minister unto him", to carry out every detail of the ritual; "to bless in his name forever", to be Jehovah's agent in mediating his grace to men. Moses' sons, Gershom and Eliezer, were heads of houses and shared Kohathite obligations. Moses is here called "the man of God", a most honored descriptive phrase. No false prophet in Biblical record is ever called "a man of God". The Kohathite assignments in Moses' day had to do with the sacred furniture of the tabernacle which they carried on their shoulders or arms. The priests who officiated at the altar were members of this family. Their duties would be of this highest order in the Temple. Verses 21-23 concern the Merarites. Merari was Levi's third son (Genesis 46:11). Gershon was represented by nine houses, Kohath by eleven, and Merari by four. Altogether there were twenty-four divisions of the tribe of Levi. In Moses' day the

Merarites had to transport the boards, bars, pillars, and sockets of the tabernacle. They probably assisted in cutting wood and carrying water for the Temple. Verse three in the present chapter indicated that the Levites were numbered beginning at age thirty. Verse twenty four states that the enumeration began at age twenty. It is possible that David understood that more Levites would be needed than could be provided under the thirty year limitation. Among the last directives (verse 27) given by David was the one which lowered the age limit to twenty years. A summary of the tasks reveals a variety of exercises that had to be done to keep the Temple functioning. Work in the courts, in the rooms built in the Temple walls, officiating at the altar, and serving in the Temple proper would involve many men. Preparing shewbread, processing the meal offerings, presenting daily sacrifices, and discharging added responsibilities during the sabbath days and special feast days required many willing hands. The whole Temple routine was amazingly involved and wonderfully demanding. It was the heart of Jehovah's government of His people. It was the life line of the total relationship of Israel to Jehovah. It was peculiarly the charge of the Levites to keep this institution functioning.

## 16. THE CLASSES OF PRIESTS AND LEVITES

(Chapter 24)

### TEXT

Chapter 24:1. And the courses of the sons of Aaron were these. The sons of Aaron: Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 2. But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. 3. And David with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to their ordering in their service. 4. And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar; and thus were they divided: of the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen, heads of fathers' houses; and of the sons of Ithamar, according to their fathers' houses, eight. 5. Thus were they

divided by lot, one sort with another; for there were princes of the sanctuary, and princes of God, both of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar. 6. And Shemaiah the son of Nethanel the scribe, who was of the Levites, wrote them in the presence of the king, and the princes and Zadok the priest, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the priests and of the Levites; one fathers' house being taken for Eleazar, and one taken for Ithamar.

7. Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, 8. the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, 9. the fifth to Malchijah the sixth to Mijamin, 10. the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, 11. the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah, 12. the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, 13. the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, 14. the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer, 15. the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Happizzetz, 16. the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezkel, 17. the one and twentieth to Jachin, the two and twentieth to Gamul, 18. the three and twentieth to Delaiah, the four and twentieth to Maaziah. 19. This was the ordering of them in their service, to come into the house of Jehovah according to the ordinance given unto them by Aaron their father, as Jehovah, the God of Israel, had commanded him.

20. And of the rest of the sons of Levi: of the sons of Amram, Shubael; of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. 21. Of Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, Isshiah the chief. 22. of the Izharites, Shelomoth; of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath. 23. And the sons of Hebron: Jeriah the chief, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth. 24. The sons of Uzziel, Micah; of the sons of Micah, Shamir. 25. The brother of Micah, Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. 26. The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi; the sons of Jaaziah: Beno. 27. The sons of Merari: of Jaaziah, Beno, and Shoham, and Zaccur, and Ibri. 28. Of Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons. 29. Of Kish; the sons of Kish: Jerahmeel. 30. And the sons of Mushi: Mahli, and Eder, and Jerimoth. These were the sons of the Levites after their fathers' houses. 31. These likewise cast lots even as their

brethren the sons of Aaron in the presence of David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the heads of the fathers' houses of the priests and of the Levites; the fathers' house of the chief even as those of his younger brother.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 24:1. The priests (the descendants of Aaron) were placed into two divisions named after Aaron's sons, Eleazar and Ithamar. Nadab and Abihu were also the sons of Aaron, but they died before their father did and had not children; so only Eleazar and Ithamar were left to carry on. 3. David consulted with Zadok, who represented the Eleazar clan, and with Ahimelech, who represented the Ithamar clan; then he divided Aaron's descendants into many groups to serve at various times. 4. Eleazar's descendants were divided into sixteen groups and Ithamar's into eight (for there was more leadership ability among the descendants of Eleazar). 5. All tasks were assigned to the various groups by coin-toss so that there would be no preference, for there were many famous men and high officials of the Temple in each division. 6. Shemaiah, a Levite and the son of Nethanel, acted as recording secretary and wrote down the names and assignments in the presence of the king and of these leaders; Zadok the priest, Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the priests and Levites. Two groups from the division of Eleazar and one from the division of Ithamar were assigned to each task.

7-18. The work was assigned (by coin-toss) in this order: First, the group led by Jehoiarib; Second, the group led by Jedaiah; Third, the group led by Harim; Fourth, the group led by Se-orim; Fifth, the group led by Malchijah; Sixth, the group led by Mijamin; Seventh, the group led by Hakkoz; Eighth, the group led by Ahijah; Ninth, the group led by Jeshua; Tenth, the group led by Shecaniah; Eleventh, the group led by Eliashib; Twelfth, the group led by Jakim; Thirteenth, the group led by Huppah; Fourteenth, the group led by Jeshebe-ab; Fifteenth, the group led by Bilgah; Sixteenth, the group led by Immer; Seventeenth, the group led by Hezir; Eighteenth, the group led

by Happizzez; Nineteenth, the group led by Pethahiah; Twentieth, the group led by Jehezkel; Twenty-first, the group led by Jachin; Twenty-second, the group led by Gamul; Twenty-third, the group led by Delaiah; Twenty-fourth, the group led by Maaziah. 19. Each group carried out the Temple duties as originally assigned by God through their ancestor Aaron. 20. These were the other descendants of Levi: Amram; his descendant Shuba-el; and Shubael's descendant Jehdeiah; 21. the Rehabiah group, led by his oldest son Isshiah; 22. the Izhar group consisting of Shelamoth and his descendant Jahath. 23. The Hebron group: Jeriah, Hebron's oldest son; Amariah, his second son; Jahaziel, his third son; Jekameam, his fourth son. 24, 25. The Uzziel group was led by his son Micah and his grandsons Shamir and Isshiah, and by Isshiah's son Zechariah. 26, 27. The Merari group was led by his sons: Mahli and Mushi. (Ja-aziah's group, led by his son Beno, included his brothers Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri.) 28. Mahli's descendants were Eleazar, who had no sons, 29. and Kish, among whose sons was Jerahmeel. 30. The sons of Mushi were Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth. These were the descendants of Levi in their various clans. 31. Like the descendants of Aaron, they were assigned to their duties by coin-toss without distinction as to age or rank. It was done in the presence of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the leaders of the priests and the Levites.

### COMMENTARY

David requested the advice and assistance of Zadok and Ahimelech in setting up the courses of the Levites for Temple service. Four sons were born to Aaron. Nadab and Abihu had been stricken down by Jehovah and they had left no sons. Eleazar and Ithamar remained and Jehovah gave them sons. In David's day Zadok represented the line of Eleazar and Abiathar (Ahimelech's son) represented Ithamar's descendants. In organizing the courses of priests in the high priestly line sixteen courses were from the line of Eleazar and eight courses were lineal descendants from Ithamar. The distinction between "princes of the sanctuary" and "princes of God" is difficult.



The suggestion has been made that the princes of God refer only to the regular high priests. Sacred lots were cast in determining the divisions and Shemaiah served by keeping the written record listing the personnel of each course.

The names of the persons who were the chief leaders of the twenty four courses are listed in verses 7-19. Some of the descendants of Jehoiarib (Joiarib) were among those returning from the Babylonian exile about 536 B.C. (Nehemiah 11:10). Jedaiah is also mentioned later in the same connection (Ezra 2:36). Sons of Harim in Ezra 2:39 and Nehemiah 7:35 would relate to this present reference. Malchijah is named in Nehemiah 11:12 and Jeremiah 21:1. Abijah, who headed the eighth course is named in Nehemiah 10:7 and Luke 1:5. The father of John the Baptist served in this course. References in the lists of those who returned from Babylonian captivity include the people of Jeshua. Descendants of some of the other heads of these Levitical courses are named in the lists in Ezra and Nehemiah. The sacred lot by which these divisions were determined may have involved the Urim and the Thummim or a similar instrument. In the using of the lot, the leaders did not simply trust mere chance. This was David's way of emphasizing the fact that Jehovah made the decision as to which persons should be in each course of priests.

Assignments for "the rest of the sons of Levi" are detailed in verses 20-31. These are the Levites who were not of the high priestly order. They could not officiate at the altar and do that kind of priestly work. These Levites had obligations as musicians, doorkeepers, and Temple guards. Jehdeiah and Isshiah were the chieftains over "the rest of the sons of Levi". These leaders were descended from Amram. David, along with Zadok and Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, cast lots to determine how and when these men should serve.

## SUMMARY QUESTIONS

### LESSON ELEVEN 23-24

351. How old was David at this time?

352. Why was Solomon placed on the throne? David had sons older than Solomon.
353. How many Levites are numbered at this time?
354. Describe the work assignments given to the Levites.
355. At what age would the Levite begin to serve at the Temple?
356. Name Gershon's two sons.
357. Name Kohath's four sons.
358. What had been Aaron's specific assignment?
359. How is Moses described in 23:14?
360. Name Moses' sons.
361. Name Aaron's sons.
362. Name Merari's two sons.
363. Why would the writer of Chronicles be concerned about this detailed genealogy of the Levites?
364. According to 23:24, at what age might a Levite begin to serve?
365. What is the "rest" of which David speaks?
366. Once the Temple was established, how were the Levites relieved of certain responsibilities?
367. List the specific tasks of the Levites who served in the Temple.
368. Describe showbread.
369. When did the Levites thank and praise Jehovah?
370. When were the new moons celebrated?
371. Identify the three great "set feasts" or annual festivals.
372. What had happened to Nadab and Abihu? Why?
373. Why did David use two chief priests? Who were they?
374. How many courses of priests were set up out of the house of Eleazar and out of the house of Ithamar?
375. What service did Shemaiah accomplish?
376. Where in the Bible outside of this chapter is there a record of a priest named Jeshua?

377. Locate in the Bible another reference to the name "Jachin". What does the name mean?
378. Why not let the priests come and serve at their own pleasure?
379. Why is Amram important in the Biblical record?
380. Identify two other persons in the Bible named Micah besides the one in 24:24.
381. Mahli's son was Eleazar. Identify another priest by this name.
382. Another Biblical character was named Kish. Who was he? Identify his tribe.
383. What device would be used in the matter of "casting lots"?

## LESSON TWELVE 25—26

### THE APPOINTMENT OF MUSICIANS DOORKEEPERS AND STEWARDS OF THE TEMPLE TREASURY

#### 17. THE TEMPLE SINGERS (Chapter 25)

##### INTRODUCTION

David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, showed real interest in the musical program of the Temple. The instrumentalists and the singers were equipped and appointed. The physical matters such as guards and treasurers were also attended to by David.

##### TEXT

Chapter 25:1. Moreover David and the captains of the host set apart for the service certain of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals: and the number of them that did the work according to their service was: 2. of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nethaniah, and Asharelah, the sons of Asaph, under the hand of Asaph, who prophesied after the order of the king. 3. Of Jeduthun; the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiiah, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun with the harp, who prophesied in giving thanks and praising Jehovah. 4. Of Heman; the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romanti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, Mahazioth. 5. All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to lift up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. 6. All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of Jehovah, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God; Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman being under the order of the king. 7. And the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in singing unto Jehovah, even all that were skillful, was two hundred fourscore and eight. 8. And they cast lots for

their offices, all alike, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar.

9. Now the first lot came forth for Asaph to Joseph: the second to Gedaliah; he and his brethren and son were twelve: 10. the third to Zaccur, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 11. the fourth to Izri, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 12. the fifth to Nethaniah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 13. the sixth to Bukkiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 14. the seventh to Jesharelah, his sons and his brethren twelve: 15. the eighth to Jeshaiiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 16. the ninth to Mattaniah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 17. the tenth to Shimei, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 18. the eleventh to Azarel, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 19. the twelfth to Hashabiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 20. for the thirteenth, Shubael, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 21. for the fourteenth, Mattithiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 22. for the fifteenth to Jeremoth, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 23. for the sixteenth to Hananiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 24. for the seventeenth to Joshbekashah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 25. for the eighteenth to Hanani, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 26. for the nineteenth to Mallothi, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 27. for the twentieth to Eliathah, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 28. for the one and twentieth to Hothir, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 29. for the two and twentieth to Giddalti, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 30. for the three and twentieth to Mahazioth, his sons and his brethren, twelve: 31. for the four and twentieth to Romanti-ezer, his sons and his brethren, twelve.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 25:1. David and the officials of the Tabernacle then appointed men to prophesy to the accompaniment of zithers, harps, and cymbals. These men were from the groups of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun. Here is a list of their names and their work: 2. Under the leadership of Asaph, the king's private prophet, were his sons Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and

Asharelah. 3. Under Jeduthun, who led in giving thanks and praising the Lord (while accompanied by the zither), were his six sons: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Shime-i, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah. 4, 5. Under the direction of Heman, the king's private chaplain, were his sons: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Geddalti, Romanti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazi-oth. (For God had honored him with fourteen sons and three daughters.) 6,7. Their music ministry included the playing of cymbals, harps, and zithers; all were under the direction of their father as they performed this ministry in the Tabernacle. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman reported directly to the king. They and their families were all trained in singing praises to the Lord; each one—288 of them in all—was a master musician. 8. The singers were appointed to their particular term of service by coin-toss, without regard to age or reputation.

9-31. The first toss indicated Joseph of the Asaph clan; The second, Gedaliah, along with twelve of his sons and brothers; The third, Zaccur and twelve of his sons and brothers; The fourth, Izri and twelve of his sons and brothers; Fifth, Nethaniah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Sixth, Bukkiah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Seventh, Jesharelah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Eighth, Jeshaiiah and twelve of his sons; Ninth, Mattaniah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Tenth, Shime-i and twelve of his sons and brothers; Eleventh, Azarel and twelve of his sons and brothers; Twelfth, Hashabiah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Thirteenth, Shuba-el and twelve of his sons and brothers; Fourteenth, Mattithiah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Fifteenth, Jeremoth and twelve of his sons and brothers; Sixteenth, Hananiah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Seventeenth, Joshbekasha and twelve of his sons and brothers; Eighteenth, Hanani and twelve of his sons and brothers; Nineteenth, Mallothi and twelve of his sons and brothers; Twentieth, Eliathah and twelve of his sons and brothers; Twenty-first, Hothir and twelve of his sons and brothers; Twenty-second, Giddalti and twelve of his sons and brothers; Twenty-third, Mahazi-oth and twelve of his sons and

brothers; Twenty-fourth, Romamti-ezer and twelve of his sons and brothers.

### COMMENTARY

As he had done on previous occasions, David gathered all of his counselors (captains of the host) to assist in the appointments of the musicians and singers.<sup>1</sup> This was not a military matter, but it did concern the princes, the heads of tribes and other principal leaders. Three important families among the Hebrews provided the personnel for the corps of musicians. Asaph was a Gershonite Levite. Heman belonged to the Kohathite family. Jeduthun was a Merarite. In these three men all of the tribe of Levi was represented. From these three branches of the tribe of Levi a choir numbering two hundred and eighty eight was selected and trained (verse 7). The specific assignment for the musicians was that they should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals (verse 1). Asaph's sons were Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Ashareliah. Their ministry is described as "prophesying", Like the seventy elders who assisted Moses by prophesying when Israel murmured against Jehovah (Numbers 11:16-30), so these men were to speak out for Jehovah, to declare His wonder through sacred music and song. In like manner, Jeduthun's six sons (verse 3), who with their father were master harpists "Prophesied in giving thanks and praising Jehovah." Heman's fourteen sons (verse 4) were trained in the use of the horn (or trumpet). These sons were under their father's direction. Heman was also regarded as a seer. Samuel filled this office at the time when Saul sought his father's lost asses (I Samuel 9:9). The seer was able by divine help to give direction to men. All of these men and their sons were trained in "the words of God" (verse 5). Their music was useful only in connection with the "word". Some of the psalms are attributed to Asaph (see Psalms 50, 73-83). Jeduthun's name appears in the titles of some Psalms (see Psalms 39, 62, 77). Several Psalms have the phrase "for the chief musician" in

<sup>1</sup>Oehler, Gustave F., *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 375. Archer, Gleason L. Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p. 395.

their titles without naming the chief musician. Perhaps certain songs were to be directed by particular leaders when singing and instrumental accompaniment were first introduced into the Temple liturgy. The sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun were under the direction of their fathers and all of the musicians were under orders from the king who in his own person was "the sweet psalmist of Israel". Music was considered to be a very important part of worship and those who served in this manner were carefully trained (verse 7). The twenty four named above were charged with the training and employment of eleven others in each instance, making a total of two hundred eighty eight musicians. To determine particular appointments, the casting of lots were used. Men with varying talents would serve in each of the twenty-four courses. Verses 9-31 list the details of the courses of the Levitical singers as they were selected by casting the sacred lot. The first lot went to Joseph, Asaph's son. The twenty fourth lot went to Romamtiezer, son of Heman. The student is impressed with the careful attention given to these assignments. All of this was set up prior to David's death and before the construction of the Temple was begun.

## 18. THE GATEKEEPERS (26:1-28)

### TEXT

Chapter 26:1. For the courses of the doorkeepers: of the Korahites, Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph. 2. And Meshelemiah had sons: Zechariah the first-born, Jediel the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, 3. Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh. 4. And Obededom had sons: Shemaiah the first-born, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, and Sacar the fourth, and Nethanel the fifth, 5. Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peullethai the eighth; for God blessed him. 6. Also unto Shemaiah his son were sons born, that ruled over the house of their father; for they were mighty men of valor. 7. The sons of Shemaiah: Othni, and Rephael, and Obed, Elzabad, whose brethren were valiant men, Elihu, and Semachiah. 8. All these were of the sons



of Obededom: they and their sons and their brethren, able men in strength for the service; threescore and two of Obed-edom. 9. And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, valiant men, eighteen. 10. Also Hasah, of the children of Merari, had sons: Shimri the chief (for though he was not the first-born, yet his father made him chief), 11. Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth: all the sons and brethren of Hosah were thirteen.

12. Of these were the courses of the doorkeepers, even of the chief men, having offices like their brethren, to minister in the house of Jehovah. 13. And they cast lots, as well the small as the great, according to their fathers' houses, for every gate. 14. And the lot eastward fell to Shelemiah. Then for Zechariah his son, a discreet counsellor, they cast lots; and his lot came out northward. 15. To Obed-edom southward; and to his sons the storehouse. 16. To Shuppim and Hosah westward, by the gate of Shallecheth, at the causeway that goeth up, watch against watch. 17. Eastward were six Levites, northward four a day, southward four a day and for the store-house two and two. 18. For Parbar westward, four at the causeway, and two at Parbar. 19. These were the courses of the doorkeepers; of the sons of the Korahites, and of the sons of Merari.

20. And of the Levites, Ahijah was over the treasures of the house of God, and over the treasures of the dedicated things. 21. The sons of Ladan, the sons of the Gershonites belonging to Ladan, the heads of the fathers' houses belonging to Ladan the Gershonite: Jehieli. 22. The sons of Jehieli: Zetham, and Joel his brother, over the treasures of the house of Jehovah. 23. Of the Amramites, of the Izharites, of the Hebronites, of the Uzzielites: 24. and Shuebuel the son of Gershon, the son of Moses, was ruler over the treasures. 25. And his brethren: of Eliezer came Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiiah his son, and Joram his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomoth his son. 26. This Shelomoth and his brethren were over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the heads of the fathers' houses, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated. 27. Out of the spoil

won in battles did they dedicate to repair the house of Jehovah. 28. And all that Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruiah, had dedicated, whosoever had dedicated anything, it was under the hand of Shelomoth, and of his brethren.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 26:1. The Temple guards were from the Asaph division of the Korah clan. The captain of the guard was Meshelemiah, the son of Kore. 2, 3. His sergeants were his sons: Zechariah (the oldest), Jedai-el (the second), Zebadiah (the third), Jathni-el (the fourth), Elam (the fifth), Jeho-hanan (the sixth), Elie-ho-enani (the seventh). 4, 5. The sons of Obed-edom were also appointed as Temple guards: Shemaiah (the oldest), Jehozabad (the second), Joah (the third), Sacar (the fourth), Nathanel (the fifth), Ammi-el (the sixth), Issachar (the seventh), Pe-ulleshai (the eighth), What a blessing God gave him with all those sons! 6, 7. Shemaiah's sons were all outstanding men, and had positions of great authority in their clan. Their names were: Othni, Repha-el, Obed, Elzabad. Their brave brothers, Elihu and Semachiah, were also very able men. 8. All of these sons and grandsons of Obed-edom—all sixty-two of them—were outstanding men who were particularly well qualified for their work. 9. Meshelemiah's eighteen sons and brothers, too, were real leaders. 10. Hosah, one of the Merari group, appointed Shimri as the leader among his sons, though he was not the oldest. 11. The names of some of his other sons were: Hilkiyah, the second; Tebaliah, the third; Zechariah, the fourth. Hosah's sons and brothers numbered thirteen in all.

12. The divisions of the Temple guards were named after the leaders. Like the other Levites, they were responsible to minister at the Temple. 13. They were assigned guard duty at the various gates without regard to the reputation of their families, for it was all done by coin-toss. 14, 15. The responsibility of the east gate went to Shelemiah and his group; of the north gate to his son Zechariah, a man of unusual wisdom; of the south gate to Obed-edom and his group (his sons were given

charge of the storehouses); 16. of the west gate and the Shallecheth Gate on the upper road, to Shuppim and Hosah. 17. Six guards were assigned daily to the east gate, four to the north gate, four to the south gate, and two to each of the storehouses. 18. Six guards were assigned each day to the west gate, four to the upper road, and two to the nearby areas. 19. The Temple guards were chosen from the clans of Korah and Merari.

20, 21, 22. Other Levites, led by Ahijah, were given the care of the gifts brought to the Lord and placed in the Temple treasury. These men of the Ladan subclan from the clan of Gershon included Zetham and Joel, the sons of Jehieli. 23, 24. Shebuel, son of Gershon and grandson of Moses, was the chief officer of the treasury. He was in charge of the divisions named after Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 25. The line of descendants from Eliezer went through Rehabiah, Jesha-iah, Joram, Zichri, and Shelomoth. 26. Shelomoth and his brothers were appointed to care for the gifts given to the Lord by King David and the other leaders of the nation such as the officers and generals of the army. 27. For these men dedicated their war loot to support the operating expenses of the Temple. 28. Shelomoth and his brothers were also responsible for the care of the items dedicated to the Lord by Samuel the prophet, Saul the son of Kish, Abner the son of Ner, Joab the son of Zeruiah, and anyone else of distinction who brought gifts to the Lord.

### COMMENTARY

The Korahites, or the descendants of Korah, and certain descendants of Merari were charged with the doorkeeping service at the Temple. I Chronicles 26:19 in a summary statement distinguishes these men from other Levites. Verses 1-9 in chapter 26 list eight courses of doorkeepers which were directly related to Korah. The name "Korah" means "baldness" and is well remembered in Hebrew history because of the rebellion led by Korah against Moses and Aaron (Numbers, chapter 16). Two hundred and fifty princes representing all of Israel's tribes joined Korah in challenging the authority of Moses and Aaron. Jehovah prepared "a new thing" in the earthquake which

swallowed these men alive. Korah's sons evidently were not involved in the trouble. In Exodus 6:24 Korah's sons are identified as Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. The Asaph in verse 1 is a shortened form of Abiasaph. Obed-edom entered the history earlier when the ark of the covenant had been taken to his house (II Samuel 6:10). He had an extensive family numbering sixty-two persons in the register used by the chronicler. This number would include sons, grandsons, and others. Obed-edom may well have been among the descendants of Korah. He and his sons served in the south sector of the Temple and in the storehouse (verse 15). Considering the nature of Korah's sin and the divine judgment that followed, it is remarkable that a place of service was reserved for his descendants. Korah was of the Kohathite family of the Levites.

Some of the doorkeepers were selected from among the Merarite Levites (verse 9). In order to determine where each course would serve, the sacred lot was employed. Nothing was left to chance and even such an ordinary matter as service at a gate required Jehovah's sanction. Each of the four sectors from which the Temple could be approached was assigned to a responsible chief doorkeeper. Shelemiah (Meshelemiah, verse 1) and his group kept the east gate. Zechariah was allotted the north sector. Obed-edom was charged to keep the entrances to the south. Shupim and Hosah shared the obligations toward the west. The daily watch at the east entrance required six Levites, while four were required in each of the other sectors. The Temple would face toward the east. The main entrance necessitated additional doorkeepers. While this might appear to be a rather unimportant service, Psalm 84, a psalm of the sons of Korah, beautifully expresses the attitude of these Levites. Verse 10 of this Psalm says, "I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

The Temple became the depository for much of the tangible wealth of Israel. When David had defeated Goliath, the giant's sword was laid up in the Tabernacle. Treasuries and store rooms would be provided in the Temple in which the gold, silver, and precious stones accumulated through Israel's wars and

commerce would be deposited. When Israel went to war, pledges and vows would be made to Jehovah with regard to spoil and prey if Jehovah would grant victory. When the victory came, often tremendous wealth would be brought to the Temple. Verses 20-28 refer to the things so dedicated by David and his captains. Israel at this time was in possession of things so dedicated by Samuel, Saul, Abner, Joab and others. When Joshua and Israel conquered Jericho (Joshua 6), the city was devoted to destruction. Any gold or silver taken in the overthrow was to be laid by in the Tabernacle. Achan died because he disregarded this agreement. He demonstrated selfishness and he failed to glorify Jehovah. David and his people saw in the dedication of these treasures a very appropriate way to thank Jehovah for victory. Ahijah, a Levite, had the chief responsibility for these treasures. Certain Gershonites and Kohathites assisted in this important assignment. The act of dedication was very sacred and involved an unconditional release of all claims on goods given to Jehovah's service. Goods or persons once dedicated could never be reclaimed by the giver. The "spoil" had to do with any kind of useful goods taken in battle. "Prey" was a term used to refer to any living thing taken by conquest, such as persons or animals. The idea of re-dedication was completely foreign to the Hebrew.

## 19. THE OFFICERS AND THE JUDGES (26:29-32)

### TEXT

Chapter 26:29. Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons were for the outward business over Israel, for officers and judges. 30. Of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, men of valor, a thousand and seven hundred, had the oversight of Israel beyond the Jordan westward, for all the business of Jehovah, and for the service of the king. 31. Of the Hebronites was Jerijah the chief, even of the Hebronites, according to their generations by fathers' houses. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valor at Jazer of Gilead. 32. And his

brethren, men of valor, were two thousand and seven hundred, heads of fathers' houses, whom king David made overseers over the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of the Manassites, for every matter pertaining to God, and for the affairs of the king.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 26:29. Chenaniah and his sons (from the subclan of Izhar) were appointed public administrators and judges. 30. Hashabiah and 1,700 of his clansmen from Hebron, all outstanding men, were placed in charge of the territory of Israel west of the Jordan River; they were responsible for the religious affairs and public administration of that area. 31, 32. Twenty-seven hundred outstanding men of the clan of the Hebronites, under the supervision of Jerijah, were appointed to control the religious and public affairs of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh. These men, all of whom had excellent qualifications, were appointed on the basis of their ancestry and ability at Jazer in Gilead in the fortieth year of King David's reign.

### COMMENTARY

Certain Levites were assigned to attend to civil matters, "the outward business", which had no direct relationship to the Temple. The terms "officers and judges" are used to detail the kind of secular service to be done. These men were chosen from the Izharites and the Hebronites, the direct descendants of Kohath, the son of Levi. Hashabiah, the Hebronite, was assigned 1700 assistants and was charged with all of the territory west of the Jordan River. Jerijah, the head of the Hebronite family, lived in the village of Jazer in Gilead, east of the Jordan River. "The business of Jehovah and the service of the king" were the principal considerations of these men.

## SUMMARY QUESTIONS

## LESSON TWELVE 25-26

384. Name three of the men who were chief musicians.
385. Identify a Psalm with which each of these names of chief musicians is associated.
386. Is there any relation between prophecy and music (25:2)?
387. Describe the principal musical instruments named here.
388. Identify another Hanani (25:4) in addition to this one.
389. How is Heman described in 25:5? What does this mean?
390. How many skilled singers were appointed?
391. Identify another Gedaliah in the Bible.
392. What other person in the Bible was called Shimei?
393. How many courses of singers were appointed?
394. Who was the original Korah in the Bible?
395. In what connection was an Obed-edom named earlier?
396. Describe a "Man of valor".
397. At what time in Bible history did a priest named Hilkiyah find a copy of the Law?
398. What was Zechariah's peculiar talent?
399. From how many sectors were entrances provided for the Temple?
400. Identify another Ahijah in the Bible.
401. What kinds of treasures would be stored in the Temple?
402. How was the spoil taken in battle to be used?
403. Explain the phrase, "the dedicated things".
404. What "affairs of the king" concerned David as these related to the tribes beyond the Jordan.

## LESSON THIRTEEN 27-29

DAVID'S MILITARY ORGANIZATION. HIS COUNSELLORS.  
HIS CHARGE TO SOLOMON. HIS PRAYER  
FOR THE TEMPLE. HIS DEATH. (27-29)

### 20. THE CAPTAINS OF THE ARMY (27:1-15)

#### INTRODUCTION

David's consuming interest late in his life was the Temple. Having furnished Solomon with the pattern, David prayed for his people and set Solomon on the throne.

#### TEXT

Chapter 27:1. Now the children of Israel after their number, to wit, the heads of fathers' houses and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and their officers that served the king, in any matter of the courses which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year—of every course were twenty and four thousand. 2. Over the first course for the first month was Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 3. He was of the children of Perez, the chief of all the captains of the host for the first month. 4. And over the course of the second month was Dodai the Ahohite, and his course; and Mikloth the ruler: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 5. The third chief: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 6. This is that Benaiah, who was the mighty man of the thirty, and over the thirty: and of his course was Ammizabad his son. 7. The fourth captain for the fourth month was Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 8. The fifth captain for the fifth month was Shamhuth the Izrahite: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 9. The sixth captain for the sixth month was Ira the son of Ikkeish the Tekoite: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 10. The seventh captain for the seventh month was Helez the Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 11.



The eighth captain for the eighth month was Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zerahites: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 12. The ninth captain for the ninth month was Abiezer the Anathothite, of the Benjamites: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 13. The tenth captain for the tenth month was Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zerahites: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 14. The eleventh captain for the eleventh month was Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim: and in his course were twenty and four thousand. 15. The twelfth captain for the twelfth month was Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel: and in his course were twenty and four thousand.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:1. The Israeli army was divided into twelve regiments, each with 24,000 troops, including officers and administrative staff. These units were called up for active duty one month each year. Here is the list of the units and their regimental commanders: 2, 3. The commander of the First Division was Jashobeam. He had charge of 24,000 troops who were on duty the first month of each year. 4. The commander of the Second Division was Dodai (a descendant of Ahohi). He had charge of 24,000 troops who were on duty the second month of each year. Mikloth was his executive officer. 5, 6. The commander of the Third Division was Benaiah. His 24,000 men were on duty the third month of each year. (He was the son of Jehoiaada the High Priest, and was the chief of the thirty highest-ranking officers in David's army.) His son Ammizabad succeeded him as division commander. 7. The commander of the Fourth Division was Asahel (brother of Joab), who was later replaced by his son Zebadiah. He had 24,000 men on duty the fourth month of each year. 8. The commander of the Fifth Division was Shamuth from Izrah, with 24,000 men on duty the fifth month of each year. 9. The commander of the Sixth Division was Ira, the son of Ikkesh from Tekoa; he had 24,000 men on duty the sixth month of each year. 10. The commander of the Seventh Division was Helez from Pelona in Ephraim, with

24,000 men on duty the seventh month of each year. 11. The commander of the Eighth Division was Sibbecai of the Hushite subclan from Zerah, who had 24,000 men on duty the eighth month of each year. 12. The commander of the Ninth Division was Abi-ezer (from Anathoth in the tribe of Benjamin), who commanded 24,000 troops during the ninth month of each year. 13. The commander of the Tenth Division was Maharai from Netophah in Zerah, with 24,000 men on duty the tenth month of each year. 14. The commander of the Eleventh Division was Benaiah from Pirathon in Ephraim, with 24,000 men on duty during the eleventh month of each year. 15. The commander of the Twelfth Division was Heldai from Netophah in the area of Othni-el, who commanded 24,000 men on duty during the twelfth month of each year.

#### COMMENTARY

David was concerned to set every department of his government in order before he died and before Solomon ascended the throne. The religious considerations were of primary importance; however he did not neglect the civil or military provisions. He established a standing army of two hundred eighty eight thousand men. These men were organized into twelve sections of twenty four thousand each. Each section was under the direction of a captain who by sheer strength and courage had won the coveted position as chief of his course. Verses 1-15 recorded the detail of this military provision and the names of the twelve captains. Jashobeam, one of David's mighty warriors, was from the tribe of Judah. Benaiah, though a Levite, held the high office of captain for the third month. Asahel, Joab's brother, had been slain by Abner. His name is memorialized in this assignment as chief captain for the third month. Asahel, Joab's brother, had been slain by Abner. His name is memorialized in this assignment as chief captain for the fourth month. His son, Zebadiah, most likely stood in his heroic father's place. Since Ira was the son of a Tekoite, he was from the tribe of Judah. The great tribe of Ephraim was represented among these warriors by Helez, captain for the seventh month.

Sibbecai was of the tribe of Judah. The tribe of Benjamin had its champion in Abiezer from the village of Anathoth. Maharai represented Judah. Benaiah's charge was the eleventh month and he represented Ephraim. Heldai (or Heled) had charge of the militia over which he was captain. He was descended from Othniel, the judge and Caleb's nephew, and he represented Judah. The twelfth month was his time of special service as appointed by the king. The tribe of Judah furnished seven of the twelve captains. Benjamin and Ephraim each provided two leaders. Levi was represented by one.

## 21. THE PRINCES OF THE TRIBES (27:16-24)

### TEXT

Chapter 27:16. Furthermore over the tribes of Israel: of the Reubenites was Eliezer the son of Zichri the ruler: of the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maacah: 17. of Levi, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel: of Aaron, Zadok: 18. of Judah, Elihu, one of the brethren of David: of Issachar, Omri the son of Michael: 19. of Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah: of Naphtali, Jeremoth the son of Azriel: 20. of the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah: of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son on Pedaijah: 21. of the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah: of Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner: 22. of Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham. These were the captains of the tribes of Israel. 23. But David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under, because Jehovah had said he would increase Israel like to the stars of heaven. 24. Joab the son of Zeruiah began to number, but finished not; and there came wrath for this upon Israel; neither was the number put into the account in the chronicles of king David.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:16-22. The top political officers of the tribes of Israel were as follows: Over Reuben, Eliezer (son of Zichri); Over Simeon, Shephatiah (son of Maacah); Over Levi,

Hashabiah (son of Kemuel); Over the descendants of Aaron, Zadok; Over Judah, Elihu (a brother of King David); Over Issachar, Omri (son of Michael); Over Zebulun, Ishmaiah (son of Obadiah); Over Naphtali, Jeremoth (son of Azriel); over Ephraim, Hoshea (son of Azaziah); Over the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel (son of of Pedaiah); Over the other half of Manasseh, in Gilead, Iddo (son of Zechariah); Over Benjamin, Ja-asiel (son of Abner); Over Dan, Azarel (son of Jeroham). 23. When David took his census he didn't include the twenty-year-olds, or those younger, for the Lord had promised a population explosion for his people. 24. Joab began the census, but he never finished it, for the anger of God broke out upon Israel; the final total was never put into the annals of King David.

### COMMENTARY

Before David passed he was concerned about the political organization of each of the tribes of Israel. Among the other matters in his check list and in the sacred record of the chronicler would be the detail of the naming of the ruler or prince of each tribe. The tribes of Gad and Asher are not listed here. For this there is no satisfactory explanation. The tribe of Levi is listed and receives special attention in that Hashabiah is the ruler over the Levites while Zadok is the ruler over the priests (those of Aaron's house). When the historian turns to Joseph he names three rulers or princes for this tribe. Hoshea is prince of Ephraim. Joel rules over Manasseh in Canaan. Iddo is prince over Manasseh beyond the Jordan eastward. Elihu (verse 18) most likely was Eliah, David's brother, who is prince of Judah. Thirteen men were named here in spite of the omission of the tribes of Gad and Asher. David had taken a military census of the tribes of Israel (II Samuel 24:1-9; I Chronicles 21) contrary to Jehovah's will. That it was a military accounting is evident in this record (verse 23) which says that he would not number those under twenty years of age.<sup>1</sup> The military age was "twenty years old and upwards" (Numbers 1:3). Jehovah had made this wonderful promise about multiplying Israel (Genesis

<sup>1</sup>Cook, F. C., *The Bible Commentary*, I Samuel-Esther, p. 363

15:5), but David was not considering that promise when he ordered Joab to take the census. Joab saw no need for the numbering and went about the task half-heartedly. Joab made no attempt to number the people of the tribes of Levi and Benjamin (I Chronicles 21: 6), so the census was never actually completed. Jehovah's wrath came in the form of an awful pestilence (I Chronicles 21:1-7) which killed seventy thousand Israelites. While David made remarkable provisions for all of the tribes of Israel at this time in the record, the historian called to remembrance David's sin which had disastrously reduced Israel's population.

## 22. THE STEWARDS OF THE TREASURIES (27:25:31)

### TEXT

Chapter 27:25. And over the king's treasures was Azmaveth the son of Adiel: and over the treasures in the fields, in the cities, and in the villages, and in the castles, was Jonathan the son of Uzziah: 26. and over them that did the work of the field for tillage of the ground was Ezri the son of Chelub: 27. and over the vineyards was Shimei the Ramathite: and over the increase of the vineyards for the winecellars was Zabdi the Shiphmite: 28. and over the olive-trees and the sycamore-trees that were in the lowland was Baal-hanan the Gederite: and over the cellars of oil was Joash: 29. and over the herds that fed in Sharon was Shitrai the Sharonite: and over the herds that were in the valleys was Shaphat the son of Adlai: 30. and over the camels was Obil the Ishmaelite: and over the asses was Jehdeiah the Meronothite: and over the flocks was Jaziz the Hagrite. 31. All these were the rulers of the substance which was king David's.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:25. Azmaveth (son of Adi-el) was the chief financial officer in charge of the palace treasuries, and Jonathan (son of Uzziah) was chief of the regional treasuries throughout the cities, villages, and fortresses of Israel. 26. Ezri (son of

Chelub) was manager of the laborers on the king's estates. 27. And Shime-i from Ramath had the oversight of the king's vineyards; and Zabdi from Shiphma was responsible for his wine production and storage. 28. Baal-hanan from Gedera was responsible for the king's olive yards and sycamore trees in the lowlands bordering Philistine territory, while Joash had charge of the supplies of olive oil. 29. Shitrai from Sharon was in charge of the cattle on the Plains of Sharon, and Shaphat (son of Adlai) had charge of those in the valleys. 30. Obil, from the territory of Ishmael, had charge of the camels, and Jehdeiah from Meronoth had charge of the donkeys. 31. The sheep were under the care of Jaziz the Hagrite. These men were King David's overseers.

### COMMENTARY

The stewardship of the treasures of the king, himself, was assigned to Azmaveth. Jonathan was chargeable for the grain, fruit, produce of the agricultural operation. Ezri had charge of the field laborers and the actual preparation and care of the soil. Shimei was assigned to manage the production of grapes. Zabdi was a specialist in the storage of the vintage. Baal-hanan was the chief officer responsible for olive groves and sycamore trees which produced a kind of edible fig. The prophet, Amos, dressed sycamore trees (Amos 7:14). The storage of olive oil was Joash's field of service. Sharon was a beautiful plain and provided good pasture between Mt. Carmel and Joppa. Shitrai specialized in animal husbandry in that district. Other valley regions and the oversight of flocks and grazing fell to the direction of Shaphat. Obil was the camel man. The name "Obil" means camel. Jehdeiah had charge of the asses. This assignment was very important because the mule was the royal carriage. Jaziz was David's steward responsible for the king's sheep and goats. There were many departments in David's government. He was careful to see that someone was responsible for every area of concern.

## 23. SPECIAL COUNSELLORS (27:32-34)

## TEXT

Chapter 27:32. Also Jonathan, David's uncle, was a counsellor, a man of understanding, and a scribe: and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni was with the king's sons: 33. and Ahithophel was the king's counsellor: and Hushai the Archite was the king's friend: 34. and after Ahithophel was Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar: and the captain of the king's host was Joab.

## PARAPHRASE

Chapter 27:32. The attendant to the king's sons was Jonathan, David's uncle, a wise counsellor and an educated man. Jehiel (the son of Hachmoni) was their tutor. 33. Ahithophel was the king's official counsellor and Hushai the Archite was his personal advisor. 34. Ahithophel was assisted by Jehoiada (the son of Benaiah) and by Abiathar. Joab was commander-in-chief of the Israeli army.

## COMMENTARY

Jonathan, here called David's uncle, is named in II Samuel 21:21 as David's brother Shimea's son. He would then be David's nephew. The term used here may simply refer to Jonathan as a relative. His credentials in this record are very good. He must have been intelligent, well educated, an able consultant to David. Ahithophel was a trusted counsellor of David's. He is identified as the grandfather of Bathsheba. When Absalom rebelled, Ahithophel went with him. Hushai returned to Jerusalem at the time of Absalom's rebellion so he could defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. When Ahithophel saw that he had taken second place to Hushai, he went home and hanged himself (II Samuel 17:23). David also received some valuable assistance in policy making from Jehoiada and Abiathar, both of whom were from the priestly connection. Joab certainly was one of David's closest confidants. All of these men were makers

of history. Each was very influential in his own right and carried the destiny of many people on his shoulders.

#### 24. DAVID'S CHARGE TO SOLOMON (28:1-10)

##### TEXT

Chapter 28:1. And David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that served the king by course, and the captains of thousands, and the captains of hundreds, and the rulers over all the substance and possessions of the king and of his sons, with the officers, and the mighty men, even all the mighty men of valor, unto Jerusalem. 2. Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, "Hear me, my brethren, and my people: as for me, it was in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and for the footstool of our God; and I had made ready for the building. 3. "But God said unto me, 'Thou shalt not build a house for my name, because thou art a man of war, and hast shed blood.' 4. "Howbeit Jehovah, the God of Israel, chose me out of all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever: for he hath chosen Judah to be prince; and in the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he took pleasure in me to make me king over all Israel; 5. "and of all my sons (for Jehovah hath given me many sons), he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of Jehovah over Israel. 6. "And he said unto me, 'Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts; for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. 7. 'And I will establish his kingdom forever, if he be constant to do my commandments and mine ordinances, as at this day.' 8. "Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of Jehovah, and in the audience of our God, observe and seek out all the commandments of Jehovah your God; that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever.

9. "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind; for Jehovah searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all



the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever. 10. "Take heed now; for Jehovah hath chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it."

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 28:1. David now summoned all of his officials to Jerusalem—the political leaders, the commanders of the twelve army divisions, the other army officers, those in charge of his property and livestock and all the other men of authority in his kingdom. 2. He rose and stood before them and addressed them as follows: "My brothers and my people! It was my desire to build a temple in which the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord could rest—a place for our God to live in. I have now collected everything that is necessary for the building, 3. but God has told me, 'You are not to build my temple, for you are a warrior and have shed much blood.' 4. "Nevertheless, the Lord God of Israel has chosen me from among all my father's family to begin a dynasty that will rule Israel forever; he has chosen the tribe of Judah, and from among the families of Judah, my father's family; and from among his sons, the Lord took pleasure in me and has made me king over all Israel. 5. And from among my sons—the Lord has given me many children—he has chosen Solomon to succeed me on the throne of his Kingdom of Israel. 6. He has told me, 'Your son Solomon shall build my temple; for I have chosen him as my son and I will be his father. 7. And if he continues to obey my commandments and instructions as he has until now, I will make his kingdom last forever.' " 8. Then David turned to Solomon and said: "Here before the leaders of Israel, the people of God, and in the sight of our God, I am instructing you to search out every commandment of the Lord so that you may continue to rule this good land and leave it to your children to rule forever.

9. Solomon, my son, get to know the God of your fathers. Worship and serve him with a clean heart and a willing mind, for the Lord sees every heart and understands and knows every thought. If you seek him, you will find him; but if you forsake

him, he will permanently throw you aside. 10. So be very careful, for the Lord has chosen you to build his holy temple. Be strong and do as he commands."

### COMMENTARY

All that has gone before has been but prelude for this grand occasion. David's remaining days were numbered. In a formal way he must charge Solomon with the awful burden of building Jehovah's house and ruling as king of Israel. Everybody who had any responsible position in the life and government of Israel was called to the capital city for this memorable occasion. Princes, captains, rulers, officers, military heroes, along with common people assembled to hear King David. The king summoned all his energies so he could stand up and speak with enough volume to be heard. He addressed the hearers as "brethren" and as "my people". Once more he recalled his intention to build God's house. He reminded all of the leaders of Israel how Jehovah had chosen his tribe, his family, himself, and now, his son, Solomon for kingship. David clearly stated that Jehovah had named Solomon to succeed him as king and to be the one who would build Jehovah's "house and courts". Solomon's kingdom was to be established forever, provided he was obedient to the Lord. David's charge to Solomon and the entire assembly was that they should learn Jehovah's will and practice it. His charge reminds one of Joshua's word to the twelve tribes when he said "possess this good land". "Enjoy its blessings and leave it for your children after you."

Specifically, David charged Solomon to come to know God. Let God be real to you. Be intimately acquainted with Him. The perfect heart would let Jehovah lead and would think God's thoughts after Him. The willing mind is the steadfast purpose to do God's will God's way. David reminded his son that he would have to answer "the searcher of hearts". "If you seek Him, you will find Him. If you forsake Him, He will abandon you". Solomon stood alone in that moment before Jehovah as the one man charged to build and to lead.

## 25. TEMPLE BUILDING-PLANS (28:11-21)

## TEXT

Chapter 28:11. Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch of the temple, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper rooms thereof, and of the inner chambers thereof, and of the place of the mercy-seat; 12. and the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, for the courts of the house of Jehovah, and for all the chambers round about, for the treasuries of the house of God, and for the treasuries of the dedicated things; 13. also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of Jehovah, and for all the vessels of service in the house of Jehovah; 14. of gold by weight for the vessels of gold, for all vessels of every kind of service; of silver for all the vessels of silver by weight, for all vessels of every kind of service; 15. by weight also for the candlesticks of gold, and for the lamps thereof, of gold, by weight for every candlestick and for the lamps thereof; and for the candlesticks of silver, silver by weight for every candlestick and for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick; 16. and the gold by weight for the tables of showbread, for every table; and silver for the tables of silver; 17. and the flesh-hooks, and the basins, and the cups, of pure gold; and for the golden bowls by weight for every bowl; and for the silver bowls by weight for every bowl; 18. and for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of the chariot, even the cherubim, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of Jehovah. 19. "All this," said David, "have I been made to understand in writing from the hand of Jehovah, even all the works of this pattern."

20. And David said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for Jehovah God, even my God, is with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until all the work for the service of the house of Jehovah be finished. 21. "And, behold, there are the courses of the priests and the Levites, for all the service of the house of God: and there shall be with thee in all manner of work every

willing man that hath skill, for any manner of service: also the captains and all the people will be wholly at thy commandment."

# PARAPHRASE

Chapter 28:11. Then David gave Solomon the blueprint of the Temple and its surroundings—the treasuries, the upstairs rooms, the inside rooms, and the sanctuary for the place of mercy. 12. He also gave Solomon his plans for the outer court, the outside rooms, the Temple storage areas, and the treasuries for the gifts dedicated by famous persons. For the Holy Spirit had given David all these plans. 13. The king also passed on to Solomon the instructions concerning the work of the various groups of priests and Levites; and he gave specifications for each item in the Temple which was to be used for worship and sacrifice. 14. David weighed out enough gold and silver to make these various items, 15. as well as the specific amount of gold needed for the lampstands and lamps. He also weighed out enough silver for the silver candlesticks and lamps, each according to its use. 16. He weighed out the gold for the table on which the Bread of the Presence would be placed and for the other gold tables. and he weighed the silver for the silver tables. 17. Then he weighed out the gold for the solid gold hooks used in handling the sacrificial meat and for the basins, cups, and bowls of gold and silver. 18. Finally, he weighed out the refined gold for the altar of incense and for the gold angels whose wings were stretched over the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord.

19. "Every part of this blueprint," David told Solomon, "was given to me in writing from the hand of the Lord."

20. Then he continued, "Be strong and courageous and get to work. Don't be frightened by the size of the task, for the Lord my God is with you; he will not forsake you. He will see to it that everything is finished correctly. 21. And these various groups of priests and Levites will serve in the Temple. Others with skills of every kind will volunteer, and the army and the entire nation are at your command."

## COMMENTARY

A building so elaborate as the Temple would require an extensive set of blueprints. When Jehovah was ready to set His Tabernacle in the center of Israel's camp He provided a complete pattern for the structure. David planned this rather formal presentation of the design for the building to Solomon. One can imagine how David turned the respective pages of the blueprint. The pattern for the porch at the entrance on the east, the plans for the "houses" (the Holy Place and the Oracle), the diagrams for the "treasuries" (storerooms built in the walls of the Temple), the blueprints for the "inner chambers" (the ground level rooms in the Temple walls), the plans for the place of the mercy seat (the Oracle) were all delivered directly to Solomon. The complete pattern in all of its details was given to David "by the Spirit". The Spirit of God communicated very clearly with the spirit of David. The design for the courts and store rooms were also submitted to Solomon. The schedule of the courses of priests and Levites was formally presented. The specific dimensions and details of the vessels of gold and silver, of the candlesticks, of the tables of shewbread (of which there were ten—II Chronicles 4:8), of the tools, bowls, flasks, altar of incense, of the cherubim were placed in Solomon's hands on this occasion. The laws of Jehovah given at Mt. Sinai were written with the fingers of God. Jehovah spoke to Moses "face to face". David said with regard to the Temple plans, "all of this have I received in writing from Jehovah's hand". He had no misgivings as to the origin of the total design. David once again charges Solomon to be firm in his commitment to begin and complete the Temple. Jehovah would be with Solomon. The priests, the Levites, master craftsmen, willing workmen, and all the people would provide the human resources to build Jehovah's House.

## 26. GIFTS AND THANKSGIVING (29:1-25)

## TEXT

Chapter 29:1. And David the king said unto all the

assembly, "Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great; for the palace is not for man, but for Jehovah God. 2. "Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for the things of gold, and the silver for the things of silver, and the brass for the things of brass, the iron for the things of iron, and wood for the things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, stones for inlaid work, and of divers colors, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. 3. "Moreover also, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, seeing that I have a treasure of mine own of gold and silver, I give it unto the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, 4. even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, wherewith to overlay the walls of the houses; 5. of gold for the things of gold, and of silver for the things of silver, and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers. Who then offereth willingly to consecrate himself this day unto Jehovah?"

6. Then the princes of the fathers' houses, and the princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers over the king's work, offered willingly; 7. and they gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand darics, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and of iron a hundred thousand talents. 8. And they with whom precious stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of Jehovah, under the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite. 9. Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with a perfect heart they offered willingly to Jehovah: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

10. Wherefore David blessed Jehovah before all the assembly; and David said, "Blessed be thou, O Jehovah, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. 11. "Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah, and thou art exalted as

head above all. 12. "Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou rulest over all; and in thy hand is power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. 13. "Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. 14. "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all the things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. 15. "For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers were: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding. 16. "O Jehovah our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee a house for thy holy name cometh of thy hand, and is all thine own. 17. "I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, that are present here, offer willingly unto thee. 18. "O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee; 19. "and give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for which I have made provision.

20. And David said to all the assembly, "Now bless Jehovah your God." And all the assembly blessed Jehovah, the God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped Jehovah, and the king. 21. And they sacrificed sacrifices unto Jehovah, and offered burnt-offerings unto Jehovah, on the morrow after that day, even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink-offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel, 22. and did eat and drink before Jehovah on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed him unto Jehovah to be prince, and Zadok to be priest. 23. Then Solomon sat on the throne of Jehovah as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. 24. And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the

king. 25. And Jehovah magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 29:1. Then King David turned to the entire assembly and said: "My son Solomon, whom God has chosen to be the next king of Israel, is still young and inexperienced, and the work ahead of him is enormous; for the temple he will build is not just another building—it is for the Lord God himself! 2. Using every resource at my command, I have gathered as much as I could for building it—enough gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and great quantities of onyx, other precious stones, costly jewels, and marble. 3. And now, because of my devotion to the Temple of God, I am giving all of my own private treasures to aid in the construction. This is in addition to the building materials I have already collected. 4, 5. These personal contributions consist of \$85,000,000 worth of gold from Ophir and \$20,000,000 worth used for the articles made of gold and silver and for the artistic decorations. Now then, who will follow my example? Who will give himself and all that he has to the Lord?"

6, 7. Then the clan leaders, the heads of the tribes, the army officers, and the administrative officers of the king pledged \$145,000,000 in gold; \$50,000 in foreign currency; \$30,000,000 in silver; 800 tons of bronze; and 4,600 tons of iron. 8. They also contributed great amounts of jewelry, which were deposited at the Temple treasury with Jehiel (a descendant of Gershom). 9. Everyone was excited and happy for this opportunity of service, and King David was moved with deep joy.

10. While still in the presence of the whole assembly, David expressed his praises to the Lord: "O Lord God of our father Israel, praise your name forever and ever! 11. Yours is the mighty power and glory and victory and majesty. Everything in the heavens and earth is yours, O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as being in control of everything. 12.



Riches and honor come from you alone, and you are the Ruler of all mankind; your hand controls power and might, and it is at your discretion that men are made great and given strength. 13. O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name, 14. but who am I and who are my people that we should be permitted to give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we only give you what is yours already! 15. For we are here for but a moment, strangers in the land as our fathers were before us; our days on earth are like a shadow, gone so soon, without a trace. 16. O Lord our God, all of this material that we have gathered to build a temple for your holy name comes from you! It all belongs to you! 17. I know, my God, that you test men to see if they are good; for you enjoy good men. I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.

18. "O Lord God of our fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Israel! Make your people always want to obey you, and see to it that their love for you never changes. 19. Give my son Solomon a good heart toward God, so that he will want to obey you in the smallest detail, and will look forward eagerly to finishing the building of your temple, for which I have made all of these preparations."

20. Then David said to all the people, "Give praise to the Lord your God!" And they did, bowing low before the Lord and the king. 21. The next day they brought a thousand young bulls, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs as burnt offerings to the Lord; they also offered drink offerings and many other sacrifices on behalf of all Israel. 22. Then they feasted and drank before the Lord with great joy. And again they crowned King David's son Solomon as their king. They anointed him before the Lord as their leader, and they anointed Zadok as their priest. 23. So God appointed Solomon to take the throne of his father David; and he prospered greatly, and all Israel obeyed him. 24. The national leaders, the army officers, and his brothers all pledged their allegiance to King Solomon. 25. And the Lord gave him great popularity with all the people of Israel,

and he amassed even greater wealth and honor than his father.

### COMMENTARY

While David had all of the dignitaries and leaders of Israel gathered before him, he charged them with the work at hand. In verses 1-5 the principal question was, "who will consecrate himself to Jehovah to build the Temple?"<sup>1</sup> David feared what might happen after his death. Solomon was young. As king he could become interested in many things besides Jehovah's house. Solomon and all Israel needed to be impressed with the fact that the "palace" (the Temple) is not for man, but for Jehovah-God. Once more David summarized the provisions he had made.<sup>2</sup> In addition to the precious metals and expensive wood, all kinds of precious stones had been laid by for use in decorating the Temple. The onyx stone had been used in the ephod of the High Priest. This was a beautiful green stone. There were stones of variegated colors. Some of the precious stones were marble-like or white. Considering the provisions made by David, every kind of precious gem in abundance would be in the stock-pile of goods for the Temple. In addition to all other preparations, David gave a "treasure of his own gold and silver". The value of this cannot accurately be estimated. When the name "Ophir" is associated with gold it describes gold of highest quality. Ophir may have been located in India, but most likely was in the region of Sheba in southwestern Arabia.

The manner in which all of the Israelites "offered willingly" for their work reminds us of the similar situation when Moses called for materials and workmen for the Tabernacle (Exodus 36:2-7). Every person with authority pledged himself and those associated with him to the work. A reference is made in verse 7 to the daric which was a Persian coin. There is no evidence of the use of coined money by the Hebrews in David's time. Princes and rulers brought gold, silver, brass, and precious stones to add to the stock-pile of materials. There was great joy in Israel that day.

<sup>1</sup>Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, pp. 438, 439.

<sup>2</sup>Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, I Chronicles, pp. 434, 435.

David took time to speak directly to Jehovah in the presence of the entire assembly. Jehovah was the only existent God and He was Israel's God. He hailed Jehovah as king and confessed Him to be owner of all things. To Jehovah belonged the kingdom, power, and glory. In all of the presentations made by king and people for the Temple, David admitted that they had only returned to Jehovah a part of that which He had given them. The brevity of man's time on earth was contrasted with the eternity of God. Just as a refiner of precious metals burns away the impurities, so Jehovah "triest the heart". David specifically addressed "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel." Once, even "the imaginations of men's hearts were evil" and Jehovah sent the Flood. Now, David prayed that the wonderful spirit moving in Israel would always motivate God's people. Commandments, testimonies, and statutes have to do with the total law of Jehovah. David prayed that Solomon would be blessed with perfect understanding of God's will. The whole congregation shared on this memorable worship experience.

All that remained to be done was the sacrificing of the animals and the enthronement of Solomon. Verses 21-25 refer to the super-abundance of the burn offerings. "A thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, a thousand lambs, plus the drink offerings" were given in Jehovah's name. The burnt offerings always symbolized the complete devotion of the offerer to his God. The eating and drinking most likely was associated with the peace offerings in which the offerer and his family shared. They were in happy covenant relationship with Jehovah. A previous public statement had been made (I Chronicles 23:1) about Solomon as king. On this occasion the holy oil was poured on his head. This symbolized his reception of the Holy Spirit. He received the crown and Jehovah's law. Zadok was there as High Priest. Solomon was Jehovah's choice for this high office. The Hebrew people, the leaders and princes (except Adonijah, Joab and Abiathar) all gladly accepted Solomon. The kingly office in Israel was to be magnified as never before.

## 27. THE CLOSE OF DAVID'S REIGN (29:26-30)

## TEXT

Chapter 29:26. Now David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. 27. And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. 28. And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead. 29. Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the history of Samuel the seer, and in the history of Nathan the prophet, and in the history of Gad the seer, 30. with all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries.

## PARAPHRASE

Chapter 29:26, 27. David was king of the land of Israel for forty years; seven of them during his reign in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. 28. He died at an old age, wealthy and honored; and his son Solomon reigned in his place. 29. Detailed biographies of King David have been written in the history of Samuel the prophet, the history written by Nathan the prophet, and in the history written by the prophet Gad. 30. These accounts tell of his reign and of his might and all that happened to him and to Israel and to the kings of the nearby nations.

## COMMENTARY

The concluding words in I Chronicles refer to the life and death of David. A son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, had ruled as king of Israel. His reign spanned forty years (that perfect Biblical number). "And he died", a phrase necessarily a part of every biography since Adam, had to be a part of this history. He was about seventy years of age, "a good old age", though not nearly as old as Abraham or Moses when they died. Those who shared in writing the history of David were Samuel, Nathan, and Gad. These men were seers and prophets and were personally acquainted with David. We have the Biblical books of Samuel;

but we have no books which are attributed to Nathan and Gad. These men were aware that very important events were transpiring in their day. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit they recorded this sacred history. With regard to David's death, Adam Clarke said that David had attained "a good old age; having lived as long as living could be desirable, and having in the main enjoyed good health. Full of days; having lived till he saw everything that he lived for either accomplished or in a state of forwardness. Full of riches; witness the immense sums left for the Temple. Full of honour; having gained more renown than any crowned head ever did, either before his time or since—laurels that are fresh to the present hour." Adam Clarke quotes Dr. Delaney's evaluation of David's life:

"To sum up all, David was a true believer. A zealous adorer of God, teacher of his law and worship, and inspirer of his praise. A glorious example. A perpetual and inexhaustible fountain of true piety. A consummate and unequalled hero; a skillful and fortunate captain; a steady patriot; a wise ruler; a faithful, generous, and magnanimous friend; and what is yet rarer, a no less generous and magnanimous enemy. A true penitent, a divine musician. A sublime poet, and an inspired prophet. By birth, a peasant; by merit, a prince; in youth, a hero; in manhood, a monarch; and in age, a saint".<sup>1</sup>

## SUMMARY QUESTIONS

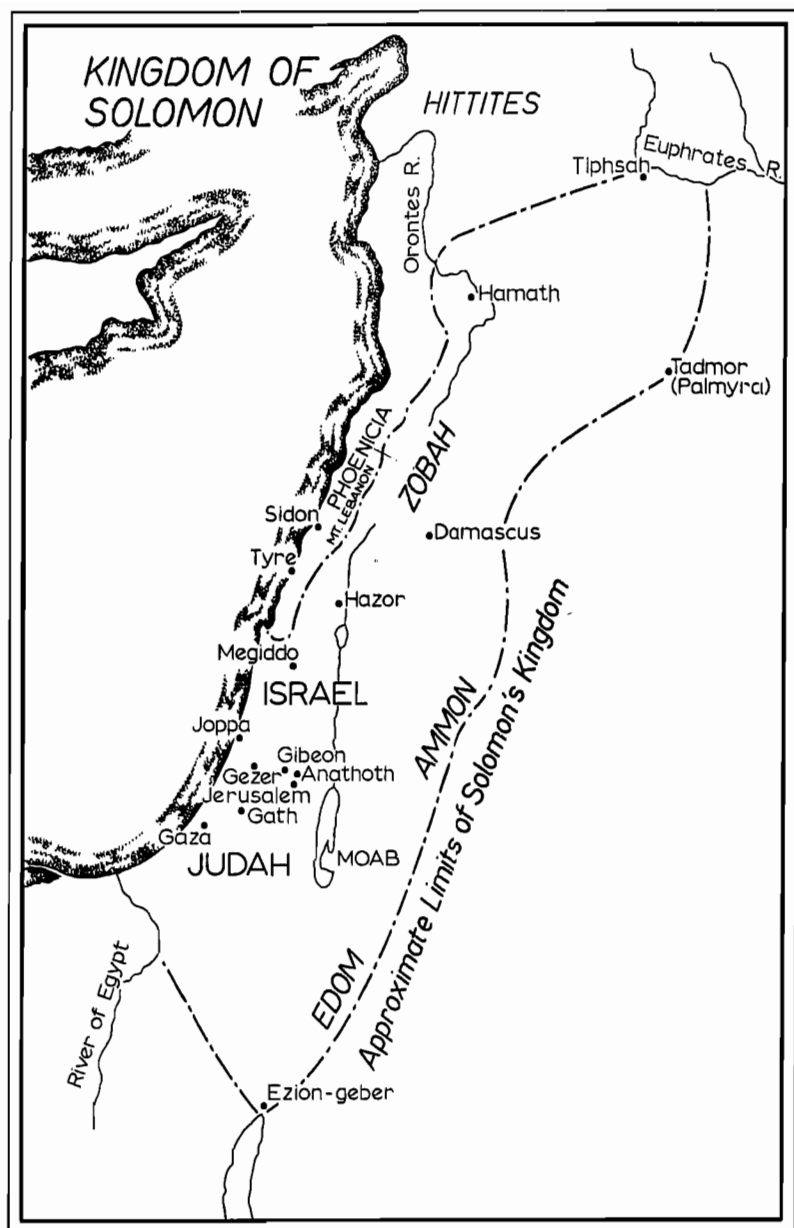
### LESSON THIRTEEN 27-29

405. How many special officials were appointed each month to serve David in Jerusalem?
406. Name the person responsible for each course of special officials.
407. Who was the Benaiah of 27:5?
408. What additional information outside of Chronicles is provided concerning Asahel?

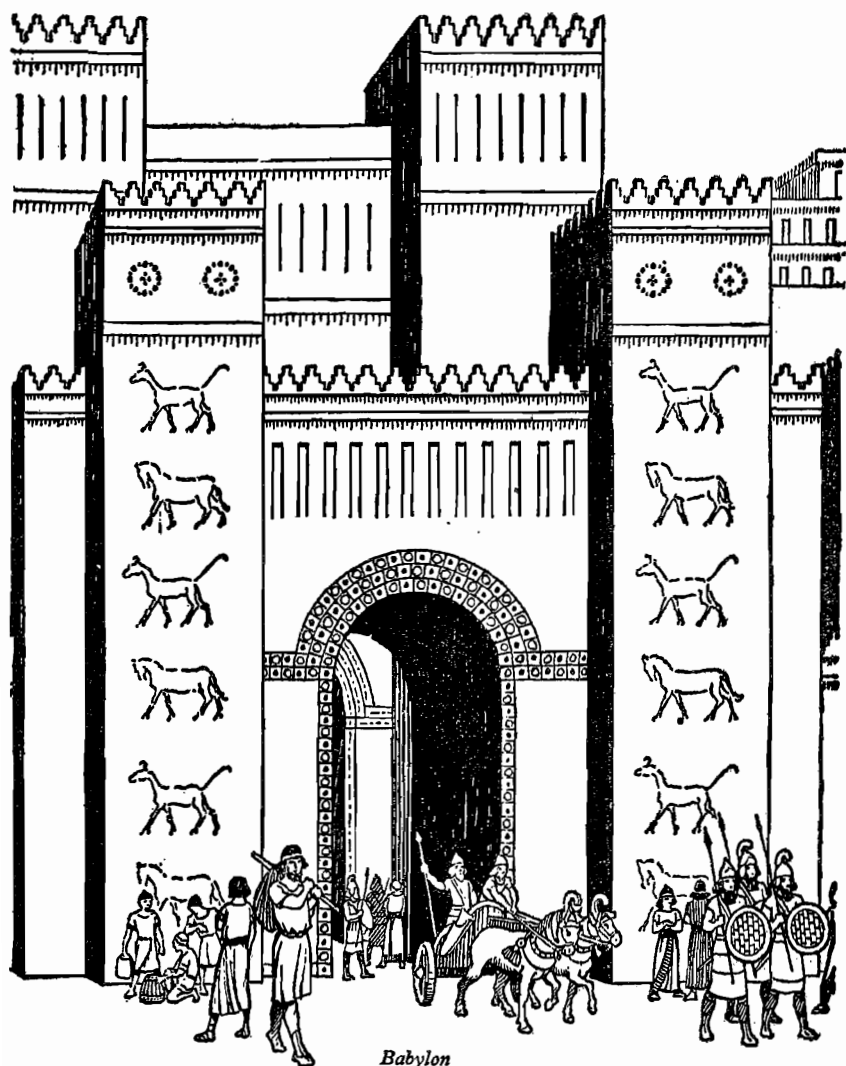
<sup>1</sup>Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 634.

409. Name the princes of each of the twelve tribes of Israel.
410. Who specifically represented the house of Aaron?
411. To whom did Jehovah promise increasing Israel like the stars of heaven?
412. Twelve rulers of David's substance are named. List the names and responsibilities of each.
413. Name David's counsellors.
414. For what purpose did David call a meeting of all his princes, captains, and mighty men?
415. Which of all the tribes of Israel did Jehovah choose for the kingly tribe?
416. What did Jehovah intend to do for Solomon?
417. What did David mean when he charged his people to possess the land of Israel?
418. How should Solomon serve Jehovah?
419. How does the Word account for the origin of the pattern of the Temple?
420. How would the fashion and weight of the candle-stick, basins, and bowls be determined?
421. Concerning the work, what promise did David make to Solomon?
422. What would Solomon do about skilled workmen for the Temple?
423. Explain David's word, "the palace is not for man". (29:1)
424. List the various kinds of materials David had prepared for the building of the Temple.
425. What did David do with his personal fortune?
426. Carefully locate Ophir.
427. In addressing the people what challenge did David propose?
428. Describe the response of the princes, captains, and rulers.
429. According to 29:11-12 what was David's concept of Jehovah?
430. What did David mean in the last part of 29:14?

- 431. Historically, who were the fathers of the Hebrew people?
- 432. What request did David make of Jehovah for Solomon?
- 433. How can an assembly of people bless Jehovah?
- 434. Why was Solomon made king a second time?
- 435. How did Solomon's kingdom compare with other kingdoms?
- 436. What was the total length of David's reign over God's people?
- 437. Name three men who wrote accounts of David's reign. Carefully identify each man.







*Babylon*

## SECOND CHRONICLES

### LESSON FOURTEEN 1-4

## I. THE HISTORY OF KING SOLOMON (1:1-9:31)

### SOLOMON'S KINGDOM THE TEMPLE AND ITS FURNISHINGS

#### 1. SOLOMON AT GIBEON (II Chronicles, Chapter 1)

##### INTRODUCTION

Solomon's choice of wisdom qualified him to be a very effective leader of Israel. He is faithful as he begins to carry out the work that his father, David had committed to him. The details of the Temple and the elaborate appointments for its adornment describe the beauty of this amazing building.

##### TEXT

Chapter 1:1. And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and Jehovah his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly. 2. And Solomon spake unto all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every prince in all Israel the heads of the fathers' houses. 3. So Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tent of meeting of God, which Moses the servant of Jehovah had made in the wilderness. 4. But the ark of God had David brought up from Kiriath-jearim to the place that David had prepared for it; for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. 5. Moreover the brazen altar, that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, was there before the tabernacle of Jehovah: and Solomon and the assembly sought unto it. 6. And Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before Jehovah, which was at the tent of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt-offerings upon it.

7. In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, "Ask what I shall give thee." 8. And Solomon said

unto God, "Thou hast showed great lovingkindness unto David my father, and hast made me king in his stead. 9. "Now, O Jehovah God, let thy promise unto David my father be established; for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. 10. "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?" 11. And God said to Solomon, "Because this was in thy heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of them that hate thee, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king: 12. wisdom and knowlege is granted unto thee? and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee; neither shall there any after thee have the like." 13. So Solomon came from the high place that was at Gibeon, from before the tent of meeting, unto Jerusalem; and he reigned over Israel.

14. And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen: for he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, that he placed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. 15. And the king made silver and gold to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore-trees that are in the lowland, for abundance. 16. And the horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt; the king's merchants received them in droves, each drove at a price. 17. And they fetched up and brought out of Egypt a chariot for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.

#### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 1:1. King David's son Solomon was now the undisputed ruler of Israel, for the Lord his God had made him a powerful monarch. 2, 3. He summoned all the army officers and judges to Gibeon as well as all the political and religious leaders of Israel. He led them up to the hill to the old Tabernacle

constructed by Moses, the Lord's assistant, while he was in the wilderness. 4. (There was a later Tabernacle in Jerusalem, built by King David for the Ark of God when he removed it from Kiriath-jearim.) 5, 6. The bronze altar made by Bezalel (son of Uri, son of Hur) still stood in front of the old Tabernacle, and now Solomon and those he had invited assembled themselves before it, as he sacrificed upon it 1,000 burnt offerings to the Lord.

7. That night God appeared to Solomon and told him, "Ask me for anything, and I will give it to you!" 8. Solomon replied, "O God, you have been so kind and good to my father David, and now you have given me the kingdom—9. this is all I want! For you have fulfilled your promise to David my father and have made me king over a nation as full of people as the earth is full of dust! 10. Now give me wisdom and knowledge to rule them properly, for who is able to govern by himself such a great nation as this one of yours?" 11. God replied, "Because your greatest desire is to help your people, and you haven't asked for personal wealth and honor, and you haven't asked me to curse your enemies, and you haven't asked for a long life, but for wisdom and knowledge to properly guide my people—12. yes, I am giving you the wisdom and knowledge you asked for! And I am also giving you such riches, wealth, and honor as no other king has ever had before you! And there will never again be so great a king in all the world!" 13. Solomon then left the Tabernacle, returned down the hill, and went back to Jerusalem to rule Israel.

14. He built up a huge force of 1,400 chariots and recruited 12,000 cavalry to guard the cities where the chariots were garaged, though some, of course, were stationed at Jerusalem near the king. 15. During Solomon's reign, silver and gold were as plentiful in Jerusalem as rocks on the road! And expensive cedar lumber was used like common sycamore! 16. Solomon sent horse-traders to Egypt to purchase entire herds at wholesale prices. 17. At that time Egyptian chariots sold for \$400 each and horses for \$100, delivered at Jerusalem. Many of these were then resold to the kings of the Hittites and Syria.

## COMMENTARY

—First and second Chronicles were considered as one book in the Hebrew canon. II Chronicles, chapter 1 concerns itself with the reign of Solomon, a very proper sequel to I Chronicles, chapter 29. II Chronicles 1:1 repeats I Chronicles 29:25. "Jehovah magnified Solomon exceedingly." In the transfer of authority from David to Solomon, the young king had every advantage which would promise a highly successful reign. As the human leader, Solomon was in complete control of the kingdom. All of the captains, judges, and princes gave attention to the king's words. Solomon was about twenty years of age when he became king. The prospects for a great era in Israel's history were exceptionally good. One of Solomon's first official acts was to call a grand assembly of all Israel to meet in Gibeon in Benjamin about five miles north of Jerusalem. At some time prior to this assembly the tabernacle (tent of meeting) had been set up at Gibeon. Everything that pertained to the tabernacle was there at Gibeon except the ark of the covenant which was in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> That which seemed so very important at this time in connection with the tabernacle was the altar of burnt offering. Bezalel is named as the one who had constructed the altar. This had been done in Moses' day at Mount Sinai (Exodus 31:1-11). The high place at Gibeon became very sacred to Solomon. "He offered a thousand burnt offerings" upon the altar. In spite of all the preparations made for the Temple, Solomon did not begin to build the great building until the fourth year of his reign (I Kings 6:1). In this period Solomon was often at Gibeon worshiping Jehovah.

On one of these occasions at Gibeon God appeared to Solomon in a very vivid visitation. Jehovah graciously offered to grant any request Solomon might make. Considering the circumstances and the timing of this proposition, it was a time of real testing for the new king. The promised establishment of the house of David (II Samuel 7) was a consideration of primary importance. Solomon was very appreciative of Jehovah's blessings and he humbly admitted that he had a most

<sup>1</sup>Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 5

demanding position to fill in behalf of a people who "were like the dust of the earth", a great multitude. Solomon's request for "wisdom and knowledge" revealed his strength of character. "Knowledge" has to do with any kind of factual information which might come to a person's consciousness. "Wisdom" is the practical application of knowledge. One acts wisely when he searches for all the facts that pertain to a given subject and decides what to do and say on the basis of what he has learned. On another occasion Solomon said, "the fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 9:10). In order to be able to use all of the resources at his command, the king knew that he had to be humble in his relationship with Jehovah. The king had to move among God's people. His every word and deed would be tested by fire. No mere human being relying upon himself could succeed in this high office. Jehovah knew Solomon's heart and He was pleased at the king's request.

The young king had made his decision and Jehovah did not hesitate to answer. For one in such a place as that in which Solomon found himself the kinds of things he could have requested were without limit. Without regard for others, the king could have acted like the prodigal son in Jesus' parable. He chose the best way when he asked for wisdom and knowledge for the peoples' benefit. Jehovah was well pleased. When God gives a person the capacity to know, there is no limit to the dimensions of that consciousness. Is it possible that the wonderful intellectual sensitivity which was Adam's before he sinned is now in large measure given to Solomon by Jehovah's decree? Solomon was to be wise, not by natural endowment, not by diligent study on his own part. Solomon's wisdom was Jehovah's gift to this select person. These unique gifts would bless the king and his people as long as both kept faith with God. If the king and Israel should break covenant, the very life-line with Jehovah would be severed. "Riches, wealth, and honor" would be Solomon's portion. Even in these matters as a wise king he would use the kingdom's wealth to benefit the citizens and he would find in his personal honor additional opportunity to be Jehovah's humble servant. No king ever

enjoyed a more exciting and promising beginning of a reign. In the glow of the sacred experience at Gibeon Solomon climbed the road to Jerusalem and began his reign.

Solomon soon involved himself in establishing chariotry installations in strategic places in the kingdom. Considered from a military standpoint, the horses and chariots were useful, but probably not necessary. Israel was already strong militarily. Fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses imported into Israel would cause some concern in Egypt and other surrounding countries. Egypt became a famous market for horses and chariots. People who lived in Asia Minor and other people who lived in the regions of Syria traded with Egypt. Horses could be purchased more cheaply than chariots. These were days of great prosperity in Israel. Tribute flowed into Solomon's treasury in great abundance. The proverbial expression, "gold like stones and cedars like sycamore trees", in an exaggerated way described good days in Israel.

## 2. PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEMPLE (Chapter 2)

### TEXT

Chapter 2:1. Now Solomon purposed to build a house for the name of Jehovah, and a house for his kingdom. 2. And Solomon counted out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand men that were hewers in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them. 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. 4. "Behold, I am about to build a house for the name of Jehovah my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him incense of sweet spices, and for the continual showbread, and for the burnt-offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the set feasts of Jehovah our God. This is an ordinance forever to Israel. 5. "And the house which I build is great; for great is our God above all gods. 6. "But who is able to build him a house, seeing heaven and the heaven of

heavens cannot contain him? Who am I then, that I should build him a house, save only to burn incense before him? 7. "Now therefore send me a man skillful to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that knoweth how to grave all manner of gravings, to be with the skillful men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide. 8. "Send me also cedar-trees, fir-trees, and algum-trees, out of Lebanon; for I know that thy servants know how to cut timber in Lebanon. And, behold, my servants shall be with thy servants, 9. even to prepare me timber in abundance; for the house which I am about to build shall be great and wonderful. 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."

11. Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because Jehovah loveth his people, he hath made thee king over them. 12. Hiram said moreover, "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with discretion and understanding, that should build a house for Jehovah, and a house for his kingdom. 13. "And now I have sent a skillful man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's, 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 devise any device; that there may be a place appointed unto him with thy skillful men, and with the skillful men of my lord David thy father. 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: 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."

17. And Solomon numbered all the sojourners 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. 18. And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand that were hewers in the mountains, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people at work.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 2:1. Solomon now decided that the time had come to build a temple for the Lord and a palace for himself. 2. This required a force of 70,000 laborers, 80,000 stonecutters in the hills, and 3,600 foremen. 3. Solomon sent an ambassador to King Hiram at Tyre, requesting shipments of cedar lumber such as Hiram had supplied to David when he was building his palace. 4. "I am about to build a temple for the Lord my God, " Solomon told Hiram. "It will be a place where I can burn incense and sweet spices before God, and display the special sacrificial bread, and sacrifice burnt offerings each morning, and evening, and on the Sabbaths, and at the new moon celebration and other regular festivals of the Lord our God. For God wants Israel always to celebrate these special occasions. 5. It is going to be a wonderful temple because he is a great God, greater than any other. 6. But who can ever build him a worthy home? Not even the highest heaven would be beautiful enough! And who am I to be allowed to build a temple for God? But it will be a place to worship him.

7. "So send me skilled craftsmen—goldsmiths and silversmiths, brass and iron workers; and send me weavers to make purple, crimson, and blue cloth; and skilled engravers to work beside the craftsmen of Judah and Jerusalem who were selected by my father David. 8. Also send me cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees from the Forests of Lebanon, for your men are without equal as lumbermen, and I will send my men to help them. 9. An immense amount of lumber will be needed, for the temple I am going to build will be huge and incredibly beautiful. 10. As to the financial arrangements, I will pay your

men 20,000 sacks of crushed wheat, 20,000 barrels of barley, 20,000 barrels of wine, and 20,000 barrels of olive oil."

11. King Hiram replied to King Solomon: "It is because the Lord loves his people that he has made you their king!" 12. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who made the heavens and the earth and who has given to David such a wise, intelligent, and understanding son to build God's Temple, and a royal palace for himself. 13. "I am sending you a master craftsman—my famous Hiramabi! He is a brilliant man, 14. the son of a Jewish woman from Dan in Israel; his father is from here in Tyre. He is a skillful goldsmith and silversmith, and also does exquisite work with brass and iron, and knows all about stonework, carpentry, and weaving; and he is an expert in the dying of purple and blue linen and crimson cloth. He is an engraver besides, and an inventor! He will work with your craftsmen and those appointed by my lord David, your father. 15. So send along the wheat, barley, olive oil, and wine you mentioned, 16. and we will begin cutting wood from the Lebanon mountains, as much as you need, and bring it to you in log floats across the sea to Joppa, and from there you can take them inland to Jerusalem."

17. Solomon now took a census of all foreigners in the country (just as his father David had done) and found that there were 153,600 of them. 18. He indentured 70,000 as common laborers, 80,000 as loggers and 3,600 as foremen.

### COMMENTARY

As Solomon considered the Temple, he desired "to build a house for the name of Jehovah".<sup>1</sup> It should be the kind of building that would give wings to a man's imagination as he thought of the character of Jehovah. Two kinds of houses are suggested in 2:1. Solomon would build Jehovah's Temple and he would also build for himself a whole range of palaces. Seventy thousand men would bear burdens. Eighty thousand

<sup>1</sup>Larue, Gerald A., *Old Testament Life and Literature*, Allyn and Bacon Inc., Boston, 1968, p. 351. Grosvenor, Melville B., *Everyday Life in Bible Times*, National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C., 1967, p. 222.

men would cut timbers in the Lebanon Forests. Men who would oversee these laborers numbered three thousand six hundred. In David's day good relations had been established with the Phoenician people. Solomon turned to Hiram (Hiram), king of Tyre and requested provision of cedar timbers. He would, at the same time, assure the Phoenicians that Israel would allow them to keep their territory by the sea. In the word sent to Hiram, Solomon emphasized that he was going to build a "great house", a house "great and wonderful", one that would require the finest building materials Hiram could provide. The kinds of religious exercises to be conducted at the Temple involved the burning of incense, the presentation of showbread, the morning and evening sacrifices, the special offerings for sabbath days and feast days. The Phoenician king would not be familiar with all of these services; but their mention would help him understand the importance of this "house". Even though Solomon was requesting goods from Gentiles, he boldly affirmed the supremacy of the God of Israel over all other gods. This did not imply that Solomon accepted the belief in other gods. Solomon's God was so great that no house would ever be sufficient to contain Him; yet the king of Israel would build a house worthy of Jehovah's name. He requested Hiram to send him materials and workmen for this project. The algar trees mentioned in verse 8 were usually imported from India or Ophir. In other places they are called "almug" trees. Phoenicia imported every kind of merchandise. She could have supplied some of this expensive wood. Solomon agreed to provide Hiram with twenty thousand measures (co-equal to about eleven bushels) of wheat and the same amount of barley. Twenty thousand baths (bath—equals about ten gallons) of wine and oil were also a part of Solomon's obligation to Hiram. The king of Tyre was well pleased with these arrangements. He pronounced blessings in Jehovah's name. He advised Solomon that he had procured the services of a skilled artisan (Hiram, I Kings 7:13, 14) whose mother was a Danite (perhaps at one time living in Naphtali) and whose father was from Tyre. This man combined the respective skills of Bezalel and Oholiab, the

master craftsmen of the Tabernacle. He could work in precious metals or in brass. He was a skilled carpenter. He was expert in the craft of textile fabrics. He was a master engraver. Hiram advised Solomon of his complete satisfaction with the proposed contract and of his willingness to do as Solomon had requested.

There was a considerable native population in Palestine that had not been removed by Israel. These were called "sojourners". In an enumeration, one hundred fifty three thousand six hundred such persons were counted. These were they who were subjected to taskwork by Solomon (verse 2).

### 3. BUILDING THE TEMPLE (3-5:1)

#### TEXT

Chapter 3:1. Then Solomon began to build the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem on mount Moriah, where Jehovah, appeared unto David his father, which he made ready in the place that David had appointed, in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 2. And he began to build in the second day of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign. 3. Now these are the foundations which Solomon laid for the building of the house of God. The length by cubits after the first measure was three-score cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits. 4. And the porch that was before the house, the length of it, according to the breadth of the house, was twenty cubits, and the height a hundred and twenty; and he overlaid it within with pure gold. 5. And the greater house he ceiled with fir-wood, which he overlaid with fine gold, and wrought thereon palm-trees and chains. 6. And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty: and the gold was gold of Parvaim. 7. He overlaid also the house, the beams, the thresholds, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold; and graved cherubim on the walls.

8. And he made the most holy house: the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house, was twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits; and he overlaid it with fine gold, amounting to six hundred talents. 9. And the weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold. And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold.

10. And in the most holy house he made two cherubim of image work; and they overlaid them with gold. 11. And the wings of the cherubim were twenty cubits long: the wing of the one cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house; and the other wing was likewise five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub. 12. And the wing of the other cherub was five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house; and the other wing was five cubits also, joining to the wing of the other cherub. 13. The wings of these cherubim spread themselves forth twenty cubits: and they stood on their feet, and their faces were toward the house. 14. And he made the veil of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubim thereon.

15. Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high, and the capital that was on the top of each of them was five cubits. 16. And he made chains in the oracle, and put them on the tops of the pillars; and he made a hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chains. 17. And he set up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz.

Chapter 4:1. Moreover he made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof. 2. Also he made the molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass; and the height thereof was five cubits; and a line of thirty cubits compassed it round about. 3. And under it was the likeness of oxen, which did compass it round about, for ten cubits, compassing the sea round about. The oxen were in two rows, cast when it was cast. 4. It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set upon them above, and all their hinder parts were inward. 5. And it was a handbreadth thick; and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, like the flower of a lily: it received and held three thousand baths. 6. He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and

five on the left, to wash in them; such things as belonged to the burnt-offering they washed in them; but the sea was for the priests to wash in.

7. And he made the ten candlesticks of gold according to the ordinance concerning them; and he set them in the temple, five on the right hand, and five on the left. 8. He made also ten tables, and placed them in the temple, five on the right side, and five on the left. And he made a hundred basins of gold. 9. Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid the doors of them with brass. 10. And he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward, toward the south.

11. And Hiram made the pots, and the shovels, and the basins. So Hiram made an end of doing the work that he wrought for king Solomon in the house of God: 12. the two pillars, and the bowls, and the two capitals which were on the top of the pillars, and the two networks to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were on the top of the pillars, 13. and the four hundred pomegranates for the two networks; two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were upon the pillars. 14. He made also the bases, and the lavers made he upon the bases; 15. one sea, and the twelve oxen under it. 16. The pots also, and the shovels, and the flesh-hooks, and all the vessels thereof, did Hiram his father make for king Solomon, for the house of Jehovah, of bright brass. 17. In the plain of the Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeredah. 18. Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: for the weight of the brass could not be found out.

19. And Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon was the showbread; 20. and the candlesticks with their lamps, to burn according to the ordinance before the oracle, of pure gold; 21. and the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold, and that perfect gold; 22. and the snuffers, and the basins, and the spoons, and the firepans, of pure gold. And as for the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the most holy place, and

the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple, were of gold.

Chapter 5:1. Thus all the work that Solomon wrought for the house of Jehovah was finished. And Solomon brought in the things that David his father had dedicated, even the silver, and the gold, and all the vessels, and put them in the treasuries of the house of God.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 3:1. Finally the actual construction of the Temple began. Its location was in Jerusalem at the top of Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to Solomon's father, King David, and where the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite had been. David had selected it as the site for the Temple. 2. The actual construction began on the seventeenth day of April in the fourth year of King Solomon's reign. 3. The foundation was ninety feet long and thirty feet wide. 4. A covered porch ran along the entire thirty-foot width of the house, with the inner walls and ceiling overlaid with pure gold! The roof was 180 feet high. 5. The main part of the Temple was paneled with cypress wood, plated with pure gold, and engraved with palm trees and chains. 6. Beautiful jewels were inlaid into the walls to add to the beauty; the gold, by the way, was of the best, from Parvaim. 7. All the walls, beams, doors, and thresholds throughout the Temple were plated with gold, with angels engraved on the walls.

8. Within the Temple, at one end, was the most sacred room—the Holy of Holies—thirty feet square. This too was overlaid with the finest gold, valued at \$18,000,000. 9. Twenty-six-ounce gold nails were used. The upper rooms were also plated with gold.

10. Within the innermost room, the Holy of Holies, Solomon placed two sculptured statues of angels, and plated them with gold. 11, 12, 13. They stood on the floor facing the outer room, with wings stretched wingtip to wingtip across the room, from wall to wall. 14. Across the entrance to this room he placed a veil of blue and crimson finespun linen, decorated with angels.

15. At the front of the Temple were two pillars  $52\frac{1}{2}$  feet high, topped by a  $7\frac{1}{2}$  foot capital flaring out to the roof. 16. He made chains and placed them on top of the pillars, with 100 pomegranates attached to the chains. 17. Then he set up the pillars at the front of the Temple, one on the right and the other on the left. And he gave them names: Jachin (the one on the right), and Boaz (the one on the left).

Chapter 4:1. He also made a bronze altar thirty feet long, thirty feet wide, and fifteen feet high. 2. Then he forged a huge round tank fifteen feet across from rim to rim. The rim stood  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet above the floor, and was forty-five feet around. 3. This tank was set on the backs of two rows of metal oxen. The tank and oxen were cast as one piece. 4. There were twelve of these oxen standing tail to tail, three facing north, three west, three south, and three east. 5. The walls of the tank were five inches thick, flaring out like the cup of a lily. It held 3,000 barrels of water. 6. He also constructed ten vats for water to wash the offerings, five to the right of the huge tank and five to the left. The priests used the tank, and not the vats, for their own washing.

7. Carefully following God's instructions, he then cast ten gold lampstands and placed them in the Temple, five against each wall; 8. he also built ten tables and placed five against each wall on the right and left. And he molded 100 solid gold bowls. 9. Then he constructed a court for the priests, also the public court, and overlaid the doors of these courts with bronze. 10. The huge tank was in the southeast corner of the outer room of the Temple.

11. Huramabi also made the necessary pots, shovels, and basins for use in connection with the sacrifices. So at last he completed the work assigned to him by King Solomon: 12-16. The construction of the two pillars, The two flared capitals on the tops of the pillars, The two sets of chains on the capitals, The 400 pomegranates hanging from the two sets of chains on the capitals, The bases for the vats, and the vats themselves, The huge tank and the twelve oxen under it, The pots, shovels, and fleshhooks. This skillful craftsman, Huramabi, made all of the



above-mentioned items for King Solomon, using polished bronze. 17, 18. The king did the casting at the claybanks of the Jordan valley between Succoth and Zeredah. Great quantities of bronze were used, too heavy to weigh.

19. But in the Temple only gold was used. For Solomon commanded that all of the utensils, the altar, and the table for the Bread of the Presence must be made of gold; 20. also the lambs and lampstands, 21. the floral decorations, tongs, 22. lamp snuffers, basins, spoons, and firepans—all were made of pure gold. Even the doorway of the Temple, the main door, and the inner doors to the Holy of Holies were of gold.

Chapter 5:1. So the Temple was finally finished. Then Solomon brought in the gifts dedicated to the Lord by his father, King David. They were stored in the Temple treasuries.

### COMMENTARY

Moriah was located on the Eastern side of the city of Jerusalem. It may well have been the place where Abraham went to offer Isaac (Genesis 22:2), although some stoutly dispute this. It is identified as the location of Ornan's threshing floor where David offered the sacrifice that stopped the plague (I Chronicles 21:18). The place was already hallowed by sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> It was on an elevation commanding attention from all sections of Jerusalem. There seemed to be no doubt that this was Jehovah's choice for the building site for the Temple. Why Solomon waited until the fourth year of his reign is not clear. He might have wanted the beginning to coincide exactly with the four hundred eightieth anniversary of the release from Egypt (I Kings 6:1). He could have been so busy setting up his kingdom, entering into contracts with other countries, that he could not begin the work any earlier. We suggest that the date when the Temple was begun was about 967 B.C. This historian was careful to mark the second day of the second month for this important event. The rest of chapters three and four describe the Temple as it was built.

<sup>1</sup>Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 638. Spence, H. D. M. *The Pulpit Commentary, II Chronicles*, p. 31.

The dimensions of the Temple proper (the Holy Place and the Oracle) were sixty cubits by twenty cubits. The Tabernacle had measured thirty cubits by ten cubits. The exact length of the cubit cannot now be determined. It is estimated to have varied between sixteen and twenty-one inches. The usually accepted standard for the cubit is eighteen inches. The porch served as an introduction to the Holy Place and is said to have measured twenty cubits in length and one hundred and twenty cubits in height. There was nothing like this in connection with the Tabernacle. I Kings 6:3 describes the porch as twenty cubits long and ten cubits broad, no reference being made to its height. Since the Temple measured thirty cubits in height, the porch would appear to be considerably out of proportion if it was one hundred cubits high. There is no satisfactory way to settle this matter. The interior of the porch was overlaid with pure gold. The skilled artisans who constructed the Tabernacle were experts in gold overlay. In this later day, Hiram and his fellow craftsmen brought their finest skills to these tasks.

“The greater house” (verse 5) was the Holy Place. The imported fir or cypress wood from Lebanon was used to cover the interior of the Holy Place. Artists carved palm trees and chains of wreathen work in this beautiful wood all of which was then overlaid with gold. This gold overlay would most likely be in the form of a transparency highlighting the grain of wood and the beauty of the carvings in the wood. The use of precious stones was not mentioned in the records in I Kings. I Chronicles 29:2 describes David’s collection of onyx stones, all kinds of precious stones, and marble stones. These were used in beautifying the interior of the Holy Place. The gold of Parvaim (verse 6) is difficult to identify because the location of Parvaim is unknown. It may describe a kind of gold of rare quality. The complete interior of the Holy Place was carved with cherubim (winged figures) and overlaid with gold. The priest would enter through the golden porch. In the Holy Place the priest walked on a golden floor, looked on walls and ceiling of gold.

“The most holy house” (the Oracle) measured twenty cubits in all three dimensions. It was a perfect cube (I Kings

6:20). The most holy place in the Tabernacle was ten cubits in all three dimensions. Since the height of the holy place was thirty cubits, there was another room ten cubits high above the Oracle. This room most likely contained "the upper chambers" which also were overlaid with gold. A very lavish proportion of gold (600 talents) was applied to the Most Holy Place as an overlay. This Oracle must have been a place of exquisite beauty defying description.

The cherubim in the tabernacle were fashioned out of the gold that formed the mercy seat, the cover for the ark. These were winged figures beneath whose wings the glory of Jehovah rested. These cherubim were in the Temple when the ark was moved into the Oracle. In addition to these cherubim, two cherubim of olivewood (I Kings 6:23) were made to hover over the ark. Each cherub was overlaid with gold and had a wingspan of ten cubits. The ark rested between these cherubim and the tip of a wing of each cherub touched a wall of the Oracle. The cherubim looked toward the Holy Place. These sacred creatures always represented the presence and the unapproachableness of Jehovah. A wall divided the Oracle from the Holy Place (I Kings 6:31, 32). Two doors of olive-wood provided entrance to the Oracle. This wall was draped with a beautiful multi-colored fine linen veil. Chains of gold were a part of this divider between the Oracle and the Holy Place (I Kings 6:21).

Two pillars of brass were made to be set at the entrance to the Holy Place. Each of these was thirty-five cubits high with a capital five cubits high crowning the column. The account in I Kings 7:15 gives the height of each pillar as eighteen cubits plus the five cubit capital. These dimensions are proportionate with those of the porch. The thirty five cubits in our present reference (verse 15) may be explained as an error by a scribe. These pillars were ornately decorated and were situated so as to command the entrance to the Holy Place. The one on the right was named Jachin (shall establish). Boaz (in it is strength) was the name for the left pillar. Those who worshipped Jehovah and went in and out of His Temple would be strengthened and established by God.

The great altar of brass was placed in the court of priests and measured twenty cubits by twenty cubits by ten cubits. The altar in the Tabernacle was five cubits by five cubits by three cubits. It has been estimated that as many as forty priests could serve at this altar at one time. The molten sea measured ten cubits in diameter. It was five cubits high and thirty cubits in circumference. The walls of the great vessel were four inches thick (a handbreadth). The reference in I Kings 7:26 indicates that the sea held two thousand baths. This may refer to the amount of water usually maintained in the vessel. The present reference (verse 5) states the capacity as three thousand baths. This may be the absolute capacity of the great sea. The estimated content of the "bath" as a liquid measure varies from about five to twelve gallons. The brim of this great vessel was ornamented "like the flower of a lily". It set upon a curiously wrought base consisting of the figures of twelve oxen. The number "twelve" was typical in its representation of the twelve tribes of Israel. The brazen sea was apparently reserved for the ceremonial washings of the priests.

Whereas there had been but one laver of brass in the Tabernacle, in addition to the great sea in the Temple there were ten lavers of brass. Each of these contained forty baths (I Kings 7:38) and was mounted on wheels so as to be mobile. These were used for the washing of the offerings and related services. Five of them were placed on either side of the court of priests.

The Temple was lighted by ten golden candlesticks. Five of these were located on either side of the Holy Place. I Kings 7:48 mentions "the table whereupon the showbread was". Here in verse 8 we read about ten tables and verse 19 refers to "tables whereon was the showbread". In the cleansing of the Temple in II Chronicles 29:18 only one table of showbread is mentioned. These ten tables may have been auxiliary to the other services in the Holy Place. The basins of gold would be used in the ministries in the Holy Place. The setting up of the court of priests in which the great altar, the sea, and the lavers were located was accomplished by laying a marble pavement and

enclosing the court with three courses of hewn stone and a course of cedar beams (I Kings 7:12). The "great court", or court of Israel enclosed the court of priests and like the other court, it too, was paved and protected by the rock wall.

All of the utensils necessary to the work of the Temple were made by Hiram. He completed the pillars of brass with all of their intricate decorations (four hundred pomegranates). The place where the casts were prepared for the works of brass was beyond the Jordan river near the Jabbok. The clay in that region was very useful for this purpose. So much brass was used in the Temple that no attempt was made to keep a record of it. The golden altar of incense, the candlesticks properly ornamented, the snuffers for servicing the lights, the firepans (golden censers), the doors for the Holy Place and the Oracle were all made according to the pattern by the master craftsman, Hiram.

### SUMMARY QUESTIONS

#### LESSON FOURTEEN 1-4

438. How does the chronicler account for Solomon's greatness?
439. Carefully locate Gibeon and explain why this place was so important to Solomon.
440. Where was the ark of the covenant at this time? Where was the brazen altar?
441. With regard to the brazen altar explain the phrase, "and Solomon and the assembly sought unto it."
442. What does 1:6 say about burnt offerings?
443. Did God really speak to Solomon? Explain.
444. To what promise did Solomon refer in 1:9?
445. Relate Solomon's reference to a "people like the dust of the earth" to Genesis 13:16.
446. What offer did God make to Solomon in 1:7?
447. What request did Solomon make of God in 1:10?

448. List the other things Solomon might have asked for.
449. Define the terms "knowledge" and "wisdom" and distinguish between them.
450. Concerning wealth and honor, what did Jehovah promise?
451. What was the number of Solomon's chariots and horsemen? Why would he need these?
452. Explain the figures of speech used in 1:15.
453. Name the country which provided horses for Israel and neighboring nations.
454. How did the cost of a chariot compare with the cost of a horse?
455. Is more than one house mentioned in 2:1? Explain.
456. How many men did Solomon have to work on the Temple?
457. Who is the Hiram of 2:3?
458. How will this "house" be used as Solomon explains his purpose in building it?
459. What is the continual showbread?
460. Why does Solomon intend that the house be great and wonderful?
461. What is the answer to Solomon's question, "Who is able to build him a house?"
462. What kind of man does Solomon describe in 2:7?
463. Describe the "algum-tree".
464. Where did these trees grow?
465. List the goods Solomon would give in exchange for time and services of workmen.
466. How much is the measure called a "bath"?
467. How did Hiram inform Solomon concerning what he would do?
468. What did Hiram say about Jehovah?
469. Identify the skilled workman provided by Hiram.

470. How would Hiram transport the building materials to Israelite country?
471. How far was Joppa from Jerusalem?
472. Who were the sojourners? How many did Solomon number?
473. How were the sojourners employed?
474. Just where in Jerusalem was the Temple built?
475. Locate a reference to Moriah in Genesis and tell what happened there?
476. What is the importance of Ornan's threshing floor?
477. Exactly when did Solomon start building the Temple? Why would he wait so long?
478. How long and how wide was the Temple?
479. What kind of structure provided entrance to the Temple?
480. What kind of wood was used for the Temple ceiling and what final application was made to this wood?
481. In what connection is Parvaim named?
482. What were cherubim?
483. What was the final application made with regard to the inner Temple walls?
484. Describe the measurements of the Holy of Holies. Compare this with the same room in the tabernacle.
485. How much gold was used in the Holy of Holies?
486. Where were the upper chambers located?
487. What was the wing spread of each cherub in the Holy of Holies?
488. According to the record in I Kings what material was used in making the cherubim?
489. Describe the veil separating the most holy place from the holy place.
490. Describe and name the pillars in the porch at the Temple entrance.
491. What is the "Oracle"?

492. What is the meaning of the names of the pillars?
493. What were the measurements of the great altar and where would it be located?
494. Describe the size of the molten sea or great laver.
495. Describe the base of the molten sea.
496. How much is a “handbreath”?
497. How much water in terms of gallons would this sea contain?
498. In addition to the great laver, how many other lavers were made?
499. What distinction was made in the usage of the molten sea and the other lavers?
500. How many candlesticks had been in use in the Tabernacle? How many are now prepared for the Temple?
501. How many tables of showbread are to be in the Temple?
502. Where would the court of the priests be located in relation to the Temple?
503. Where was the molten sea located?
504. Name the skilled artisans who made the vessels of brass.
505. Four hundred pomegranates are numbered. Where were these used?
506. Locate the foundry where the brass was molded.
507. How much brass was used in constructing the Temple?
508. Of what material were the tables of showbread and the candlesticks made?
509. What is a snuffer?
510. How would spoons be used in the Temple?
511. If one would have had the privilege of standing just inside the door of the Temple, describe what he would have seen.



## LESSON FIFTEEN 5-8

### THE ARK AND THE TEMPLE. SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION. A GREAT FESTIVAL. SOLOMON AS KING.

#### 3. BUILDING THE TEMPLE—Continued (3-5:1)

##### INTRODUCTION

The ark was set in the Holy of Holies. The Temple was finished. When the prayer was completed, the Temple was filled with the light of the glory of God. Solomon established himself as the king of Israel.

##### TEXT

(Scripture text in Lesson Fourteen)

##### PARAPHRASE

(Scripture text in Lesson Fourteen)

##### COMMENTARY

Solomon was faithful in all matters that pertained to the Temple. Those vessels that were specifically designed for the Temple services were completed according to their respective patterns. In addition to these there were many sacred vessels acquired in David's day and dedicated to Jehovah. These were placed in special rooms set apart for such treasures. The building of the Temple was complete in the eleventh year of Solomon's reign after seven years of diligent work on the magnificent structure (I Kings 6:38). Solomon called a great assembly of elders and princes to a meeting in Jerusalem for the purpose of bringing the ark of the covenant into the Temple. Although the Temple was not completed until the eighth month, this significant event of bringing in the ark took place in the seventh month. The seventh month, Tisri, was the first month of the civil year. The first day of this month was the Hebrew New Year. The tenth day was the Day of Atonement. The Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated through eight days beginning on the fifteenth day of the month. Through several

years the ark had been kept in the tent David had set up for it in Jerusalem. On this important occasion the ark, the Tent, the furnishings and utensils of the old Tabernacle were carried into the Temple. Here is a beautiful picture of the progress of Jehovah's self-revelation. Having completed His purpose with regard to the old Tabernacle, He now causes it to be folded away and laid in storage rooms in the Temple. In its place a grand new institution was brought into being. The day would come when the Temple would have fulfilled its purpose. It too, would be removed, and in its place the grandest institution of all, the Church, would be brought on the scene. The assignment for moving the ark and the Tabernacle was given to the Levites. To underscore the consecration of the king and the people, great numbers of sacrifices were offered. We would assume that these offerings were presented on the altar of burnt offering in the court of priests at the Temple. Of all the parts of the Old Tabernacle, only the ark of the covenant would actually be used in the Temple. Once the ark had contained the tables of the Law, a pot of manna, and Aaron's rod. The only treasure in the ark when it was brought into the Temple were the tables of the Law. The manna and Aaron's rod probably had been removed by the Philistines when they had the ark in Samuel's day. The ark was carried into the Oracle and placed beneath the extended wings of the large cherubim which were built for the Oracle. The curious note concerning the staves is not clear. The staves were to remain in the rings of the ark at all times so that it could readily be lifted to the shoulders of priests and moved at Jehovah's direction. The ark with its staves in place was in the Oracle at the time that the writer of II Chronicles completed his record. So the most sacred vessel out of the old Tabernacle was placed in the holiest part of the Temple.

#### 4. DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE (5:2 - 7:22)

##### TEXT

Chapter 5:2. Thus all the work that Solomon wrought for the house of Jehovah was finished. And Solomon brought in the

things that David his father had dedicated, even the silver, and the gold, and all the vessels, and put them in the treasuries of the house of God.

2. Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the princes of the fathers' houses of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of Jehovah out of the city of David, which is Zion. 3. And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king at the feast, which was in the seventh month. 4. And all the elders of Israel came: and the Levites took up the ark; 5. and they brought up the ark, and the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent; these did the priests the Levites bring up. 6. And king Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be counted nor numbered for multitude. 7. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of Jehovah unto its place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubim. 8. For the cherubim spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and the staves thereof above. 9. And the staves were so long that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without: and there it is unto this day.<sup>10</sup> 10. There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put there at Horeb, when Jehovah made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.

11. And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place (for all the priests that were present had sanctified themselves, and did not keep their courses; 12. also the Levites who were the singers, all of them, even Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and their brethren, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets); 13. it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of

music, and praised Jehovah, saying, "For he is good; for his lovingkindness endureth for ever;" that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of Jehovah, 14. so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of Jehovah filled the house of God.

Chapter 6:1. Then spake Solomon, "Jehovah hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. 2. "But I have built thee a house of habitation, and a place for thee to dwell in for ever." 3. And the king turned his face, and blessed all the assembly of Israel: and all the assembly of Israel stood.

4. And he said, "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, who spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hands fulfilled it, saying, 5. 'Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be prince over my people Israel: 6. but I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there, and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.' 7. "Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel. 8. "But Jehovah said unto David my father, 'Whereas it was in thy heart to build a house for my name, thou didst well that it was in thy heart: 9. 'nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name.' 10. "And Jehovah hath performed his word that he spake; for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as Jehovah promised, and have built the house for the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel. 11. "And have I set the ark, wherein is the covenant of Jehovah, which he made with the children of Israel."

12. And he stood before the altar of Jehovah in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands. 13. (for Solomon had made a brazen scaffold, five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven); 14. and he said, "O

Jehovah, the God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven, or on earth; who keepest covenant and lovingkindness with thy servants, that walk before thee with all their heart; 15. who hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou didst promise him: yea, thou spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thy hand, as it is this day. 16. "Now therefore, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him saying, 'There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel, if only thy children take heed to their way, to walk in my law as thou hast walked before me.' 17. "Now therefore, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, let thy word be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David.

18. "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have builded! 19. "Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant; and to his supplication, O Jehovah my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee; 20. that thine eyes may be open toward this house day and night, even toward the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall pray toward this place. 21. "And hearken thou to the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: yea, hear thou from thy dwelling-place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.

22. "If a man sin against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and he come and swear before thine altar in this house; 23. then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, requiting the wicked, to bring his way upon his own head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

24. "And if thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house; 25. then hear thou from heaven, and

forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers.

26. "When the heavens are shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them: 27. then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou teachest them the good way wherein they should walk; and send rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

28. "If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting or mildew, locust or caterpillar; if their enemies besiege them in the land of their cities: whatsoever plague or whatsoever sickness there be; 29. what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, who shall know every man his own plague and his own sorrow, and shall spread forth his hands toward this house: 30. then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and render unto every man according to all his ways, whose heart thou knowest (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of the children of men); 31. that they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

32. "Moreover concerning the foreigner, that is not of thy people Israel, when he shall come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thine outstretched arm; when they shall come and pray toward this house: 33. then hear thou from heaven, even from thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the foreigner calleth to thee for; that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as doth thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name.

34. "If thy people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatsoever way thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name; 35. then hear thou from heaven their prayer and their supplication and maintain their cause.

36. "If they sin against thee (for there is no man that sinneth not), and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive unto a land far off or near; 37. yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn again, and make supplication unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned, we have done perversely, and have dealt wickedly;' 38. if they return unto thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captive, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name: 39. then hear thou from heaven, even from thy dwelling-place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people who have sinned against thee.

40. "Now, O my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent, unto the prayer that is made in this place. 41. "Now therefore arise, O Jehovah God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O Jehovah God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. 42. "O Jehovah God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember thy loving-kindnesses to David thy servant.

Chapter 7:1. Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of Jehovah filled the house. 2. And the priests could not enter into the house of Jehovah, because the glory of Jehovah filled Jehovah's house. 3. And all the children of Israel looked on, when the fire came down, and the glory of Jehovah was upon the house; and they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and gave thanks unto Jehovah, saying, "For he is good; for his lovingkindness endureth for ever."

4. Then the king and all the people offered sacrifice before the Lord. 5. And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of

God. 6. And the priests stood, according to their offices; the Levites also with instruments of music of Jehovah, which David the king had made to give thanks unto Jehovah (for his lovingkindness endureth for ever), when David praised by their ministry: and the priests sounded trumpets before them; and all Israel stood. 7. Moreover Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that was before the house of Jehovah; for there he offered the burnt-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings, because the brazen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt-offering, and the meal-offering, and the fat.

8. So Solomon held the feast at that time seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly, from the entrance of Hammath unto the brook of Egypt. 9. And on the eighth day they held a solemn assembly: for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and feast seven days. 10. And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away unto their tents, joyful and glad of heart for the goodness that Jehovah had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.

11. Thus Solomon finished the house of Jehovah, and the king's house: and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of Jehovah, and in his own house, he prosperously effected. 12. And Jehovah appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, 'I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice. 13. "If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; 14. if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. 15. "Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent, unto the prayer that is made in this place. 16. "For now have I chosen and hallowed this house, that my name may be there for ever; and mine eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually. 17. "And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and mine



ordinances; 18. then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I covenanted with David thy father, saying, 'There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel.'

19. "But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; 20. then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and I will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 21. "And this house, which is so high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall say, 'Why hath Jehovah done thus unto this land, and to this house?' 22. "And they shall answer, Because they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.' "

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 5:2. Solomon now summoned to Jerusalem all of the leaders of Israel—the heads of the tribes and clans—for the ceremony of transferring the Ark from the (Tabernacle in the) City of David, also known as Zion, (to its new home in the Temple). 3. This celebration took place in October at the annual Festival of Tabernacles.

4, 5. As the leaders of Israel watched, the Levites lifted the Ark and carried it out of the Tabernacle, along with all the other sacred vessels. 6. King Solomon and the others sacrificed sheep and oxen before the Ark in such numbers that no one tried to keep count! 7, 8. Then the priest carried the Ark into the inner room of the Temple—the Holy of Holies—and placed it beneath the angels' wings; their wings spread over the Ark and its carrying poles. 9. These carrying poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the outer room, but not from the outside doorway. The Ark is still there at the time of this writing. 10. Nothing was in the ark except the two stone tablets which Moses had put there at Mount Horeb, when the Lord

made a covenant with the people of Israel as they were leaving Egypt.

11, 12. When the priests had undergone the purification rites for themselves, they all took part in the ceremonies without regard to their normal duties. And how the Levites were praising the Lord as the priests came out of the Holy of Holies! The singers were Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and all their sons and brothers, dressed in finespun linen robes and standing at the east side of the altar. The choir was accompanied by 120 priests who were trumpeters, while others played the cymbals, lyres, and harps. 13, 14. The band and chorus united as one to praise and thank the Lord; their selections were interspersed with trumpet obbligatos, the clashing of cymbals, and the loud playing of other musical instruments—all praising and thanking the Lord. Their theme was "He is so good! His lovingkindness lasts forever!" And at that moment the glory of the Lord, coming as a bright cloud, filled the Temple so that the priests could not continue their work.

Chapter 6:1. This the prayer prayed by Solomon on that occasion: "The Lord has said that he would live in the thick darkness, But I have made a Temple for you, O Lord, to live in forever!" 3. Then the king turned around to the people and they stood to receive his blessing:

4. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel," he said to them, "—the God who talked personally to my father David and has now fulfilled the promise he made to him. For he told him, 5, 6. 'I have never before, since bringing my people from the land of Egypt, chosen a city anywhere in Israel as the location of my Temple where my name will be glorified; and never before have I chosen a king for my people Israel. But now I have chosen Jerusalem as that city, and David as that king.' 7. "My father David wanted to build this Temple, 8. but the Lord said not to. It was good to have the desire, the Lord told him, 9. but he was not the one to build it: his son was chosen for that task. 10. And now the Lord has done what he promised, for I have become king in my father's place, and I have built the Temple for the Name of the Lord God of Israel, 11. and placed the Ark

there. And in the Ark is the Covenant between the Lord and his people Israel."

12, 13. As he spoke, Solomon was standing before the people on a platform in the center of the outer court, in front of the altar of the Lord. The platform was made of bronze, 7½ feet square and 4½ feet high. Now, as all the people watched, he knelt down, reached out his arms toward heaven, and prayed this prayer: 14. "O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like you in all of heaven and earth. You are the God who keeps his kind promises to all those who obey you, and who are anxious to do your will. 15. And you have kept your promise to my father David, as is evident today. 16. And now, O God of Israel, carry out your further promise to him that 'your descendants shall always reign over Israel if they will obey my laws as you have.' 17. Yes, Lord God of Israel, please fulfill this promise too.

18. But will God really live upon the earth with men? Why, even the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain you—how much less this Temple which I have built! 19. "How I pray that you will heed my prayers, O Lord my God! Listen to my prayer that I am praying to you now! 20, 21. Look down with favor day and night upon this Temple—upon this place where you have said that you would put your name. May you always hear and answer the prayers I will pray to you as I face toward this place. Listen to my prayers and to those of your people Israel when they pray toward this Temple; yes, hear us from heaven, and when you hear, forgive.

22. "Whenever someone commits a crime, and is required to swear to his innocence before this altar, 23. then hear from heaven and punish him if he is lying, or else declare him innocent.

24. "If your people Israel are destroyed before their enemies because they have sinned against you, and if they turn to you and call themselves your people, and pray to you here in this Temple. 25. then listen to them from heaven and forgive their sins and give them back this land you gave to their fathers.

26. "When the skies are shut and there is no rain because of our sins, and then we pray toward this Temple and claim you as

our God and turn from our sins because you have punished us, 27. then listen from heaven and forgive the sins of your people, and teach them what is right; and send rain upon this land which you have given to your people as their own property.

28. "If there is a famine in the land, or plagues, or crop disease, or attacks of locusts or caterpillars, or if your people's enemies are in the land besieging our cities—whatever the trouble is—29. listen to every individual's prayer concerning his private sorrow, as well as all the public prayers. 30. Hear from heaven where you live, and forgive, and give each one whatever he deserves, for you know the hearts of all mankind. 31. Then they will reverence you forever, and will continually walk where you tell them to go.

32. "And when foreigners hear of your power, and come from distant lands to worship your great name, and to pray toward this Temple, 33. hear them from heaven where you live, and do what they request of you. Then all the people of the earth will hear of your fame and will reverence you, just as your people Israel do; and they too will know that this Temple I have built is truly yours.

34. "If your people go out at your command to fight their enemies, and they pray toward this city of Jerusalem which you have chosen, and this Temple which I have built for your name, 35. then hear their prayers from heaven and give them success.

36. "If they sin against you (and who has never sinned?) and you become angry with them, and you let their enemies defeat them and take them away as captives to some foreign nation near or far, 37, 38. and if in that land of exile they turn to you again, and face toward this land you gave their fathers, and this city and your Temple I have built, and plead with you with all their hearts to forgive them, 39. then hear from heaven where you live and help them and forgive your people who have sinned against you.

40. "Yes, O my God, be wide awake and attentive to all the prayers made to you in this place. 41. And now, O Lord God, arise and enter this resting place of yours where the Ark of your strength has been placed. Let your priests, O Lord God, be

clothed with salvation, and let your saints rejoice in your kind deeds. 42. O Lord God, do not ignore me—do not turn your face away from me, your anointed one. Oh, remember your love for David and your kindness to him.”

Chapter 7:1. As Solomon finished praying, fire flashed down from heaven and burned up the sacrifices! And the glory of the Lord filled the Temple, so that the priests couldn't enter! 3. All the people had been watching and now they fell flat on the pavement, and worshipped and thanked the Lord. “How good he is!” they exclaimed. “He is always so loving and kind.”

4, 5. Then the king and all the people dedicated the Temple by sacrificing burnt offerings to the Lord. King Solomon's contribution for this purpose was 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. 6. The priests were standing at their posts of duty, and the Levites were playing their thanksgiving song, “His Loving-kindness Is Forever,” using the musical instruments that King David himself had made and had used to praise the Lord. Then, when the priests blew the trumpets, all the people stood again. 7. Solomon consecrated the inner court of the Temple for use that day as a place of sacrifices for the bronze altar to accommodate.

8. For the next seven days, they celebrated the Tabernacle Festival, with large crowds coming in from all over Israel; they arrived from as far away as Hamath at one end of the country to the brook of Egypt at the other. 9. A final religious service was held on the eighth day. 10. Then, on October 7, he sent the people home, joyful and happy because the Lord had been so good to David and Solomon and to his people Israel.

11. So Solomon finished building the Temple as well as his own palace. He completed what he had planned to do. 12. One night the Lord appeared to Solomon and told him, “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this Temple as the place where I want you to sacrifice to me. 13. If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust swarms to eat up all of your crops, or if I send an epidemic among you, 14. then if my people will humble themselves and pray, and search for me, and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear

them from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land. 15. I will listen, wide awake, to every prayer made in this place. 16. For I have chosen this Temple and sanctified it to be my home forever; my eyes and my heart shall always be here. 17. "As for yourself, if you follow me as your father David did, 18. then I will see to it that you and your descendants will always be the kings of Israel;

19. but if you don't follow me, if you refuse the laws I have given you, and worship idols, 20. then I will destroy my people from this land of mine which I have given them, and this Temple shall be destroyed even though I have sanctified it for myself. Instead, I will make it a public horror and disgrace. 21. Instead of its being famous, all who pass by will be incredulous. " 'Why had the Lord done such a terrible thing to this land and to this Temple?' they will ask. 22. "And the answer will be, 'Because his people abandoned the Lord God of their fathers, the God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they worshipped other gods instead. That is why he has done all this to me.' "

### COMMENTARY

This was one of those high moments in the history of God's people. Priests, Levites, musicians, singers all joined their voices in the praise of Jehovah. There were twenty-four courses of priests. All of these were represented on this occasion. All of the instrumentalists and the singers along with one hundred and twenty trumpeters shared in this glad service. They praised Jehovah for His goodness and lovingkindness (Psalm 136:1). He had done His religious duty toward Israel. The prospects for His continued blessings were wonderful. In some respects what happened here causes us to think about what was to take place in Jerusalem on another day when the people were all of one mind and the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 2). Jehovah came down to His people when the Temple was finished and He filled the House with His glory. It was a day to be long remembered in Israel's history.

Solomon was equal to the circumstances of this grand

occasion. In chapter 6:1-11 he spoke to the people. He made reference to the "thick darkness" because the cloud filled the Temple. No man could look on the full glory of Jehovah and live. The darkness itself added to the mystery of the one true God. The king knew that no man could build a house which would contain Jehovah, yet he and Israel had built a House for their God. The time had arrived when an official presentation of this Temple to Jehovah should be made. So he blessed Jehovah, "the God of Israel." He reviewed the fact that Jehovah had been content to have the Tabernacle represent His habitation among His people. In the later revelation of His will Jehovah chose David to be king and chose Jerusalem to be the capital city. Solomon reminded the people of David's desire to build the Temple and of Jehovah's restraint in this matter. As David's son, by divine appointment, Solomon had "built the house" and set the ark in its proper place.

Solomon had built a platform and a pulpit near the great altar of brass in the court of the priests. In his address to the people and in his prayer to Jehovah he was fully motivated. "He spread forth his hands" or "kneeled down upon his knees" as the mood dictated. His prayer of dedication is a model prayer. His attitude toward the people, his humility in Jehovah's presence, his seriousness as he considered the implications of these relationships all deserve careful study. Solomon's God was incomparable. He was the covenant God. Jehovah's promise to David (II Samuel 7) was often on Solomon's mind. One of David's line was always to be on the throne of Israel. Jehovah could not be contained in any house. The whole universe is His House. Nevertheless, Solomon and Israel had built a beautiful Temple for their God. In putting Jehovah's name in that place, Solomon considered the total character of God. The Temple would represent to the Hebrews all that Jehovah had ever revealed concerning Himself as far as this could be made known through a building. The Temple would be the only Holy Place in all the world for God's people. Wherever His people might be when they "prayed toward this place," when they considered the power and mercy of their God and called on Him for help,

they could expect Him to hear and answer.

Various circumstances out of which Jehovah's people might need to call upon Him are now previewed. A man might have some goods left with him by a neighbor. When the neighbor returned to claim it, his friend might tell him the goods had been stolen. The neighbor could demand that his friend take an oath in Jehovah's name swearing that he was truthful. Solomon's prayer was that the wicked would be condemned and the righteous justified. If Israel should sin and for this reason suffer at the hands of enemies, Solomon prayed that Jehovah would intervene if the Israelites in question would repent. There would be times when Jehovah might send drought and famine because of sin. Solomon's prayer was that if there was recognition of sin, genuine sorrow for sin, and "prayer toward the House," Jehovah would hear and forgive. He realized that Jehovah could send pestilence, blasting, mildew, locusts, many kinds of plagues. Solomon never asked Jehovah to cease being God. He only asked that in keeping with His mercy He would answer genuine repentance. One of the most remarkable aspects of Solomon's prayer has to do with the foreigners (verse 32). Solomon previewed the times when proselytes would join themselves to the Hebrew people. If the foreigner would be willing to come on Jehovah's terms, Solomon asks that Jehovah will receive him. This is the basic principle that provided the Apostle Paul his defense for his ministry. When Israel would go to war in Jehovah's name or when any Hebrew might be taken captive by an enemy because he had sinned, "if he prays toward this House," Solomon plead for God's help. So Solomon committed his trust and the confidence of his people to Jehovah, their God. The Temple, the ark, the king, the priests, the people all waited in Jehovah's presence.

Jehovah was ready with the answer to Solomon's prayer. While the king was praying, the sacrifices were burning on the altar. With regard to "fire coming down from heaven," we are reminded of the miraculous fire descending on the altar in the Tabernacle when the services were inaugurated (Leviticus



9:24).<sup>1</sup> We are also reminded of Jehovah's answer to Elijah's prayer on Mount Carmel (I Kings 18:38).<sup>2</sup> The glory (or brightness) of Jehovah filled the Temple to such an extent that the priests had to withdraw. The priests stood in awe of the whole experience much as Israel had done at Mount Sinai. It was a day of worship never to be forgotten by those who saw Jehovah's glory. What could the people say in such circumstances? "Jehovah is good; for His lovingkindness endureth forever."

The dedication of the Temple coincided with the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. Under ordinary conditions more offerings were presented at this time than at any other time during the year. Since this was such a special occasion, all of the facilities for worship were taxed to the limit. Offerings of dedication included twenty two thousand oxen and one hundred twenty thousand sheep. The sacrificing and feasting continued throughout the eight days of the Feast of Tabernacles. Since all of the offerings could not be accommodated at the altar of burnt offering, a special dispensation permitted "the hallowing of the middle of the court" so that many offerings could be made at one time. The priest directed the worship. Some worked with the animal sacrifices, while others directed the music and singing. There had never been a day like this in Jerusalem. The total time involved in the celebration covered fourteen days. Seven days had been required for "the dedication of the altar" and seven days for the Feast of Tabernacles. The great assembly of Israelites had come to Jerusalem from the length and breadth of the land. Hammath was on the Orontes River about two hundred and fifty miles north of Jerusalem. The brook of Egypt flowed into the Mediterranean Sea about forty miles south of Gaza. On the day following the two weeks of celebration there was one final holy convocation from which the people were sent on their way rejoicing. The Temple was finished when it became a house of sacrifice. Solomon was able to do every good thing he desired for the Temple and for the kingdom.

<sup>1</sup>Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 83

<sup>2</sup>Schaff, Philip, *Lange's Commentary*, Chronicles, p. 178

The account of Jehovah's appearing to Solomon by night (verse 12) reminds us of His appearance to Solomon at Gibeon when the young king made his choice of wisdom. We are not told how long after the dedication of the Temple this appearance took place. Jehovah plainly declared that He was pleased with the Temple. The Temple was not a monument or a memorial. It was "a house of sacrifice" where Jehovah's people could give vital expression to their living faith in God. In direct answer to Solomon's prayer, Jehovah recognized that His people might sin and thus He would be forced to judge them by famine, locusts, or pestilence. Jehovah's character remained constant. Sin must be judged. However, He would temper judgment with mercy provided His people would confess their sin, repent, and commit themselves to do His will. The Temple was a house of prayer. The eyes of Jehovah would ever be upon the Temple and upon those who would "seek Jehovah's face" through worship at the Temple and the daily practice of the revealed religion. Jehovah renewed His promise to Solomon. If Solomon would be like David and if he obeyed Jehovah, his kingdom would be established and through him Jehovah would begin to keep His promise to David. However, if Solomon should forget God and turn to idols, both king and people would be "plucked up by the roots" (completely destroyed). Solomon was advised by direct revelation that the presence of the Temple in Jerusalem did not guarantee the safety of king and people. The Temple could be described as a "high house," but if Israel sinned, Jehovah would destroy Temple, city, king, and people. Instead of being a messenger of Jehovah to the nations, Israel would then become a by-word or a song of derision. The alternatives were laid very plainly before the king. If he should turn away from Jehovah, he had no excuse.

## 5. BUILDING, LABORERS AND SHIPS (8:1-18)

### TEXT

Chapter 8:1. And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of Jehovah, and his

own house, 2. that the cities which Hiram had given to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there.

3. And Solomon went to Hamath-zobah, and prevailed against it. 4. And he built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store cities, which he built in Hamath. 5. Also he built Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, fortified cities, with walls, gates, and bars; 6. and Baalath, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and all the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and all that Solomon desired to build for his pleasure in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

7. As for all the people that were left of the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, that were not of Israel; 8. of their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel consumed not, of them did Solomon raise a levy of bond-servants unto this day. 9. But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work; but they were men of war, and chief of his captains, and rulers of his chariots and of his horsemen. 10. And these were the chief officers of king Solomon, even two hundred and fifty, that bare rule over the people.

11. And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her; for he said, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of Jehovah hath come."

12. Then Solomon offered burnt-offerings unto Jehovah on the altar of Jehovah, which he had built before the porch, 13. even as the duty of every day required, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the set feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.

14. And he appointed, according to the ordinance of David his father, the courses of the priest to their service, and the

Levites to their offices, to praise, and to minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required; the doorkeepers also by their courses at every gate: for so had David the man of God commanded. 15. And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures.

16. Now all the work of Solomon was prepared unto the day of the foundation of the house of Jehovah, and until it was finished. So the house of Jehovah was completed.

17. Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber, and to Eloth, on the seashore in the land of Edom. 18. And Hiram sent him by the hands of his servants ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they came with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and fetched from thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought them to king Solomon.

#### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 8:1. It was now twenty years since Solomon had become king, and the great building projects of the Lord's Temple and his royal palace were completed. 2. He now turned his energies to rebuilding the cities which King Hiram of Tyre had given to him, and he relocated some of the people of Israel into them.

3. It was at this time, too, that Solomon fought against the city of Hamath-zobah and conquered it. 4. He built Tadmor in the desert, and built cities in Hamath as supply centers. 5. He fortified the cities of upper Beth-horon and lower Beth-horon, both being supply centers, building their walls and installing barred gates. 6. He also built Baalath and other supply centers at this time, and constructed cities where his chariots and horses were kept. He built to his heart's desire in Jerusalem and Lebanon and throughout the entire realm.

7, 8. He began the practice that still continues of conscripting as slave laborers the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites—the descendants of those nations which the Israelis had not completely wiped out. 9. However, he didn't make slaves of any of the Israeli citizens, but used them

as soldiers, officers, charioteers, and cavalry-men; 10. also, two hundred fifty of them were government officials who administered all public affairs.

11. Solomon now moved his wife (she was Pharaoh's daughter) from the City of David sector of Jerusalem to the new palace he had built for her. For he said, "She must not live in King David's palace, for the Ark of the Lord was there and it is holy ground."

12. Then Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar he had built in front of the porch of the Temple. 13. The number of sacrifices differed from day to day in accordance with the instructions Moses had given; there were extra sacrifices on the Sabbaths, on new moon festivals and at the three annual festivals—the Passover celebration, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Tabernacles.

14. In assigning the priests to their posts of duty he followed the organizational chart prepared by his father David; he also assigned the Levites to their work of praise and of helping the priests in each day's duties; and he assigned the gatekeepers to their gates. 15. Solomon did not deviate in any way from David's instructions concerning these matters and concerning the treasury personnel.

16. Thus Solomon successfully completed the construction of the Temple.

17, 18. Then he went to the seaport towns of Ezion-geber and Eloth, in Edom, to launch a fleet presented to him by King Hiram. These ships, with King Hiram's experienced crews working alongside Solomon's men, went to Ophir and brought back \$13,000,000 worth of gold to him!

### COMMENTARY

Solomon had spent seven years building the Temple and thirteen years building his own palaces. These palaces included the House of the Forest of Lebanon, a Porch of Pillars, his personal quarters, a Judgment Hall, a House for Pharaoh's Daughter (I Kings 7:1-8). All of these buildings were wonderfully constructed, ornately furnished, and they were situated in

proper relationship to the Temple.<sup>1</sup> According to I Kings 9:11-13, Solomon had given Hiram (Hiram), king of Tyre, twenty cities in Galilee. These villages bordered the Phoenician country and were given to the Phoenicians as partial payment for their help in providing supplies for Solomon's building program. Hiram was not at all pleased with the transaction and showed his displeasure by calling these villages "Cabul," which means "good for nothing." Since the Phoenicians evidently did nothing with the villages, Solomon made some improvements which made the villages attractive to certain Israelites for settlement.

Hamath-zobah is the same city mentioned in 7:8. There may have been some uprising in this vicinity which Solomon was able to put down. He most likely established garrisons of soldiers in that district. Tadmor was west of Damascus about one hundred and forty miles about equi-distant from the Orontes and Euphrates rivers. The garrisons at Tadmor helped secure the northern borders of the kingdom. The villages of Beth-horon were in the territory of Ephraim, not far from Jerusalem in a north-westerly direction. Baalath was a village in the tribe of Dan. Solomon built whatever he pleased in any of these places either by way of military fortification or for his own personal satisfaction.

There were in Solomon's kingdom remnants of the native inhabitants of Palestine. Five of the seven native nations are named in verse 7. Girgashites and Canaanites are the others who are not named. All of these people were supposed to be utterly dispossessed in Joshua's day and the period of conflict that followed. The Hebrews failed in this matter. Instead of annihilating these people, they subjected them to taskwork. The free-born children of Israel were the chief military leaders. From among these Solomon selected two hundred and fifty men who were to have very responsible military positions.

In his complex of costly palaces Solomon built a house especially for the daughter of Pharaoh. Before his palaces were completed he had occupied the quarters of his father, David. At

<sup>1</sup>Schultz, Samuel, J., *The Old Testament Speaks*, pp. 148, 149

this time he was able to move his queen into a palace more worthy of her dignity. In those months that followed the completion of the Temple Solomon was faithful in his service to Jehovah. He was careful to attend to the burnt offerings. By these he vowed his complete commitment to Jehovah. It is possible that he attended both morning and evening sacrifices at the altar. Special offerings were made on the sabbath day, to usher in a new month, and for the three great annual festivals. As long as the king was careful about these matters, he remained faithful to Jehovah. Solomon sought out carefully the appointments and schedule of service for the priests and Levites as these had been determined by David. He was faithful in administering this program. Once more, the chronicler emphasizes the fact that "the house of Jehovah was completed" when it functioned as a place of worship.

In Solomon's day Israel's wealth was greatly increased through the operation of two navies.<sup>1</sup> One of these, the Tarshish navy, was based at Tyre in Phoenicia. It was manned by Phoenician seamen and touched all of the main coastal cities on the whole perimeter of the Mediterranean as it went as far west as Spain (I Kings 10:22). The Ophir navy, also manned by Phoenicians, used Ezion-geber and Eloth at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba as home ports (I Kings 9:26-28). This navy moved through the entire length of the Red Sea touching the west coast of Arabia and the east coast of Africa. This navy visited ports in India and probably went as far east as China. Immense wealth was brought into Israel from these distant places. These navies also exported much merchandise from Israel. The four hundred and fifty talents of gold probably represents one deposit made upon the return of this Ophir navy. If the gold talent was worth thirty thousand dollars, this would amount to thirteen million five hundred thousand dollars.

<sup>1</sup>Grosvenor, Melville, B., *Everyday Life in Bible Times*, pp. 246-248  
Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 648

## SUMMARY QUESTIONS

## LESSON FIFTEEN 5-8

512. What were the dedicated things of 5:1?
513. When the Temple was finished what was the next important work to be done?
514. Locate the city of David as this is mentioned in 5:2.
515. When was the great feast held and why would it be appointed for this particular time?
516. Who actually moved the ark?
517. What was the "tent of meeting"?
518. As the ark was being moved, what was Solomon doing?
519. Exactly where was the ark finally placed?
520. What was in the ark at this time? What other materials had been in the ark previously?
521. Why were the priests not keeping their courses just at this time?
522. Identify Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun.
523. Where was the altar (5:12) located?
524. As the service of dedication proceeded why did the priests have to draw back from the Temple?
525. According to Solomon, for what purpose was the Temple built?
526. In Solomon's address to the people what did he say about Jerusalem and about David?
527. How did Solomon regard the ark?
528. How did Jehovah regard David's desire to build the Temple?
529. Describe the scaffold of 6:13.
530. What was Solomon's concept of Jehovah?
531. State the promise which Solomon calls upon Jehovah to fulfill.
532. Did Solomon believe that the Temple was worthy of God? Explain.



- 533. Explain the phrase, “to pray toward this place”.
- 534. Was “oath taking” contrary to God’s will? Explain.
- 535. What is the “turning again” of 6:24?
- 536. Why might terrible drought be experienced?
- 537. List the various problems which Solomon anticipates and indicate his plan for handling them.
- 538. What does Solomon say about the foreigners? Why is this so remarkable?
- 539. When Israel has sinned, what is the nature of her hope?
- 540. Describe the request the king made for the priests and the saints.
- 541. Who is the “anointed”?
- 542. By what means did Jehovah show His approval of Solomon’s prayer?
- 543. What does “the glory of Jehovah” mean?
- 544. Describe Jehovah’s lovingkindness.
- 545. How many oxen and sheep were sacrificed to Jehovah at the time of the dedication of the Temple?
- 546. How was the middle of the Temple court hallowed?
- 547. How long did the dedicatory service last?
- 548. Carefully locate “Hamath” and “the brook of Egypt”.
- 549. In what attitude did the Israelites return to their homes?
- 550. When Jehovah appeared to Solomon at night summarize His word to Solomon.
- 551. Describe the wonderful promise in 7:14.
- 552. On what basis did Jehovah covenant to bless Solomon?
- 553. Under what circumstance might the Temple become a proverb?
- 554. How many years passed as Solomon built the Temple and his palaces?
- 555. Locate Tadmor.
- 556. Where was Beth-horon located?
- 557. What would be the kind of building which Solomon did in Lebanon?

558. How did Solomon handle the problems relating to the Amorites and Jebusites?
559. To what offices did Solomon appoint certain Israelites?
560. Identify the person who became Solomon's wife. What did he do for her?
561. Identify the great annual feasts of the Hebrews.
562. What did Solomon do with respect to the priests and Levites?
563. When would it be considered that the Temple was really finished?
564. Locate Ezion-geber.
565. Who manned Solomon's navy?
566. What valuable import did the navy bring back to Israel?

## LESSON SIXTEEN 9—11

### A QUEEN COMES TO JERUSALEM. REHOBAM AND THE KINGDOM.

#### 6. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA AND SOLOMON'S GREATNESS (Chapter 9)

##### INTRODUCTION

The wisdom of Solomon brought the queen of Sheba to Jerusalem. Solomon's wealth could not be counted. His last years were filled with shame as he turned away from God. Rehoboam came to the throne in Judah and saw the kingdom divided.

##### TEXT

Chapter 9:1. And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great train, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. 2. And Solomon told her all her questions; and there was not anything hid from Solomon which he told her not. 3. And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, 4. and the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, his cupbearers also, and their apparel, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of Jehovah; there was no more spirit in her. 5. And she said to the king, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. 6. "Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me; thou exceedest the fame that I heard. 7. "Happy are the men, and happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom. 8. "Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who delighted in thee, to set thee on his throne, to be king for Jehovah thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do

justice and righteousness."

9. And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and spices in great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. 10. And the servants also of Hiram, and the servants of Solomon, that brought gold from Ophir, brought alnum-trees and precious stones. 11. And the king made of the alnum-trees terraces for the house of Jehovah, and for the king's house, and harps and psalteries for the singers: and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah. 12. And king Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which she had brought unto the king. So she turned, and went to her own land, she and her servants.

13. Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold. 14. besides that which the traders and merchants brought: and all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon. 15. And king Solomon made two hundred bucklers of beaten gold; six hundred shekels of beaten gold went to one buckler. 16. And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three hundred shekels of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon. 17. Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with gold. 18. And there were six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, which were fastened to the throne, and stays on either side by the place of the seat, and two lions standing beside the stays. 19. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom. 20. And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold: silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. 21. For the king had ships that went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram; once every three years came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

22. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. 23. And all the kings of the earth sought the

presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 24. And they brought every man his tribute, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year. 25. And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, that he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. 26. And he rules over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt. 27. And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore-trees that are in the lowland, for abundance. 28. And they brought horses for Solomon out of Egypt, and out of all lands.

29. Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the history of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat? 30. And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. 31. And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 9:1. When the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fabled wisdom, she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions. A very great retinue of aids and servants accompanied her, including camel-loads of spices, gold, and jewels. 2. And Solomon answered all her problems. Nothing was hidden from him; he could explain everything to her. 3. When she discovered how wise he really was, and how breathtaking the beauty of his palace, 4. and how wonderful the food at his tables, and how many servants and aides he had, and when she saw their spectacular uniforms and his stewards in full regalia, and saw the size of the men in his bodyguard, she could scarcely believe it! 5. Finally she exclaimed to the king. "Everything I heard about you in my own country is true! 6. I didn't believe it until I got here and saw it with my own eyes. Your wisdom is far greater than I could ever have imagined. 7. What a privilege

for these men of yours to stand here and listen to you talk! 8. Blessed be the Lord your God! How he must love Israel to give them a just king like you! He wants them to be a great, strong nation forever."

9. She gave the king a gift of over a million dollars in gold, and great quantities of spices of incomparable quality, and many, many jewels. 10. King Hiram's and King Solomon's crews brought gold from Ophir, also sandalwood and jewels. 11. The king used the sandalwood to make terraced steps for the Temple and the palace, and to construct harps and lyres for the choir. Never before had there been such beautiful instruments in all the land of Judah. 12. King Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba gifts of the same value as she had brought to him, plus everything else she asked for! Then she and her retinue returned to their own land.

13, 14. Solomon received a billion dollars worth of gold each year from the kings of Arabia and many other lands that paid annual tribute to him. In addition, there was a trade balance from the exports of his merchants. 15. He used some of the gold to make 200 large shields, each worth \$280,000. 16. and 300 smaller shields, each worth \$140,000. The king placed these in the Forest of Lebanon Room in his palace. 17. He also made a huge ivory throne overlaid with pure gold. 18. It had six gold steps and a footstool of gold; also gold armrests, each flanked by a gold lion. 19. Gold lions also stood at each side of each step. No other throne in all the world could be compared with it! 20. All of King Solomon's cups were solid gold, as were all the furnishings in the Forest of Lebanon Room. Silver was too cheap to count for much in those days! 21. Every three years the king sent his ships to Tarshish, using sailors supplied by King Hiram, to bring back gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

22. So King Solomon was richer and wiser than any other king in all the earth. 23. Kings from every nation came to visit him, and to hear the wisdom God had put into his heart. 24. Each brought him annual tribute of silver and gold bowls, clothing, armor, spices, horses, and mules. 25. In addition,

Solomon had 4,000 stalls of horses and chariots, and 12,000 cavalry-men stationed in the chariot cities, as well as in Jerusalem to protect the king. 26. He rules over all kings and kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines and as far away as the border of Egypt. 27. He made silver become as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones in the road! And cedar was used as though it were common sycamore. 28. Horses were brought to him from Egypt and other countries.

29. The rest of Solomon's biography is written in the history of Nathan the prophet and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and also in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 30. So Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all of Israel for forty years. 31. Then he died and was buried in Jerusalem, and his son Rehoboam became the new king.

### COMMENTARY

I Kings 10:1-13 recounts the remarkable visit of the Queen of Sheba as she came to Jerusalem in Solomon's day.<sup>1</sup> Sheba was located in Arabia some fifteen hundred miles south of Jerusalem. It was at the southern extremity of the Red Sea and north of the Indian Ocean. The kind of gifts that she brought would indicate that she had an abundance of wealth at her disposal. We are impressed by the fact that even though she lived so far from Jerusalem, she had "heard of the fame of Solomon." Her primary concern was to prove Solomon's wisdom. This is a good commentary on Jehovah's promise to give Solomon a wise and an understanding heart. The Arabians found pleasure in riddles, proverbs, in matters pertaining to natural history. The Queen was disposed to doubt that anyone could be as wise as Solomon was heralded to be. The caravan which accompanied the Queen was one of great splendor. Camels were loaded with spices, gold (120 talents), and precious stones. Spices were often more precious than gold itself. The gifts she brought were of inestimable value. Many attendants were in the company of this Queen. Solomon willingly received

<sup>1</sup>Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 106ff

the queen as an honored guest and they freely exchanged ideas. In all of the intellectual matters Solomon passed every test and the time came when the royal guest "had seen the wisdom of Solomon." While she was in Jerusalem, Solomon showed her his house (the Temple and the whole range of palaces). "The ascent" (verse 4) probably refers to the architectural device of winding stairs which provided access to the second and third stories of rooms built in the Temple wall. She paid particular attention to the banquet food, the servants and their dress. The Queen confessed that what she had heard about Solomon's wisdom was so unbelievable that she could not accept it unless she could personally confirm it. She was most complimentary in her evaluation. "Thou exceedest the fame that I heard." "The half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me." In the name of Solomon's God the Queen of Sheba blessed Solomon and his people. Prophetically she spoke of a reign of justice and righteousness and of Israel's being established forever.

She and Solomon exchanged gifts. He gave her "all her desire." When her delightful visit was complete she returned to her own land bearing lavish treasures from Israel. The chronicler records the fact that the Ophir navy also brought much gold, precious stones and algum trees into the land of Israel. The algum trees were native to India and were of excellent texture for exquisite woodwork, especially for making musical instruments. These were days of wonderful prosperity in Israel.

The Queen of Sheba gave Solomon one hundred and twenty shekels of gold. The gold paid into Solomon's treasuries by the nations subject to Israel amounted to more than five times that which the Queen presented as a gift. The annual tribute was six hundred and sixty six talents of gold. This cannot be accurately figured in terms of our currency, but may have amounted to as much as twenty five million dollars. In addition to this there were several other important sources of revenue in connection with commerce. The national income far exceeded expenditures. Solomon had the excess gold fashioned into shields which could be properly displayed in the great military museum in the house of the Forest of Lebanon. The "buckler" was a large



oblong shield designed to protect the entire body of a warrior. Two hundred of these shields were fashioned. Each shield contained six hundred shekels of gold. Three hundred shields were fashioned each of which contained three hundred shekels of gold. There were thirty six hundred shekels of gold in each talent of gold. These shields represented values from two thousand five hundred dollars to five thousand dollars. They remained in the great military house until they were carried away by Shishak, King of Egypt (I Kings 14:26), in the fifth year of king Rehoboam. Solomon's throne was a worthy seat for the great king.<sup>1</sup> Ivory was imported from Africa and India. This material was used in the basic construction. It was beautiful in its own right; however this beauty was enhanced by a gold overlay. The throne was elevated. It was fashioned with arms and was provided with a foot-rest of gold. The lion was the symbol of kingly power. This animal was the peculiar symbol that pertained to the tribe of Judah. The arm rests on the throne may have been fashioned like a lion. Whether there were twelve or twenty-four lions fashioned to guard the steps is difficult to determine. The number "twelve" or its double would represent all of the tribes of Israel. The uniqueness of the throne is emphasized by the chronicler. In these days of unrivaled prosperity all of the appointments for Solomon's personal quarters and for state ceremonies were made of gold. It is possible that this luxurious living had much to do in turning Solomon away from Jehovah.

"The kings of the earth" (verses 22, 23) were those who reigned in territories from Egypt to the Euphrates River. Jehovah had kept His promise. Solomon was the wisest of all and he had great wealth at his disposal. The kinds of goods considered valuable are listed in verse 24—silver, gold, raiment, armor, spices, horses and mules. Solomon was renowned for his chariotry installations. These were necessary from a military standpoint to protect various sections of Israel's territory. Four thousand stalls for horses and twelve thousand horsemen

<sup>1</sup>Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 648

composed this select service.<sup>1</sup> This was in sharp contrast with Israel's lack of such resources when Joshua first brought them into Canaan. Solomon procured the horses and chariots from Egypt. The prosperity of Israel is described proverbially in verse 27 when the writer indicates that silver was like stones and cedar trees were as plentiful as sycamores in Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup>

Nathan, Ahijah and Iddo are identified as persons who wrote histories of the life and times of Solomon. Nathan was the personal seer who charged David in his sin with Bathsheba. Ahijah the Shilonite (I Kings 11:28-40; 14:1-20) distinguished himself as Jehovah's herald in predicting the division of the kingdom to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Later Ahijah pronounced Jehovah's judgment on Jeroboam because of the king's wickedness. According to II Chronicles 12:15, Iddo the seer wrote a history of Rehoboam. The life and times of Abijah, king of Judah, were described "in the commentary of the prophet Iddo" (II Chronicles 13:22). The life and times of Solomon were said to have been written "in the visions of Iddo the seer." Iddo also was concerned about Jeroboam, king of Israel. These three men, Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo were important original sources for some of the materials in this record.

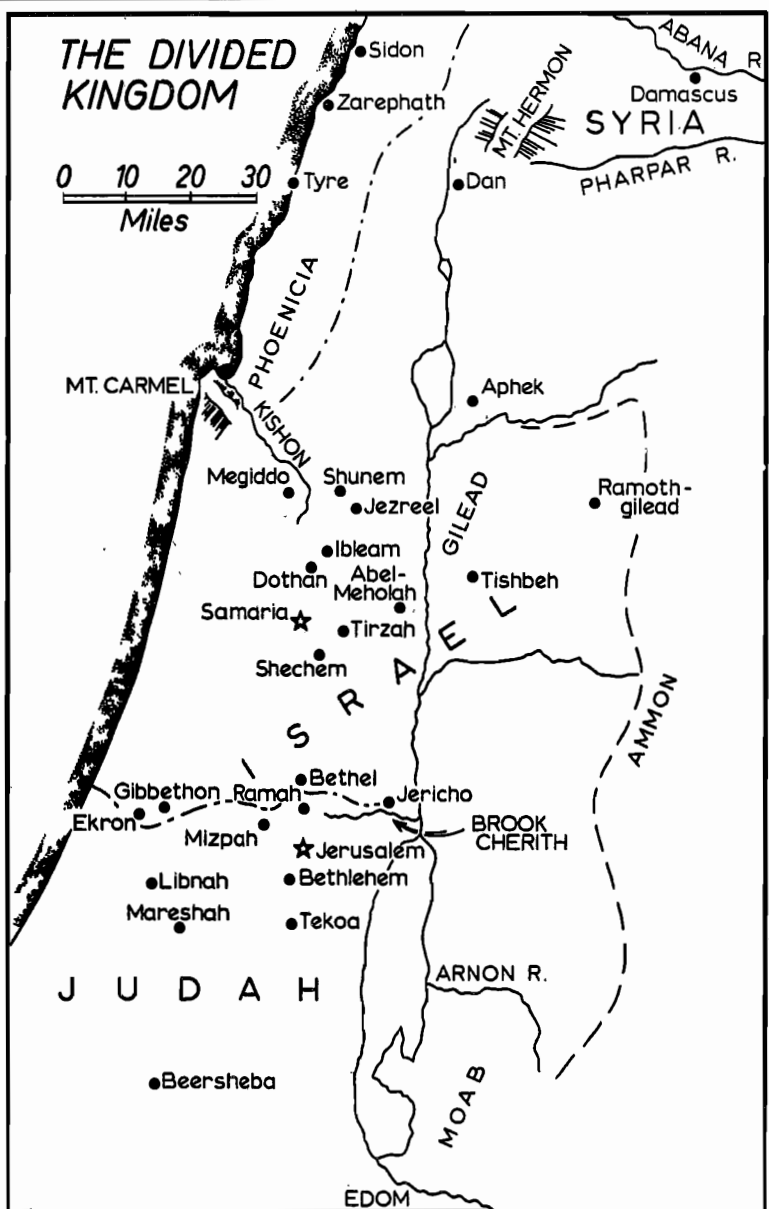
Like his father before him, Solomon's reign reached through forty years. While no adverse word is recorded here, the first twenty four years of Solomon's reign were productive of much good; but the last sixteen years found Solomon rebelling against Jehovah in every conceivable way. "And Solomon slept with his fathers," the Bible says. Certainly he was one of God's choice men; but he died. This experience awaits the wise man and the fool alike. It is of the utmost importance that every person be faithful to God until he dies. At the time of David's death a royal cemetery was established at Jerusalem. Solomon was buried with all of the honors that were due him as king of Israel. By Jehovah's grace, Solomon's successor to the throne was Rehoboam, the king's only son.

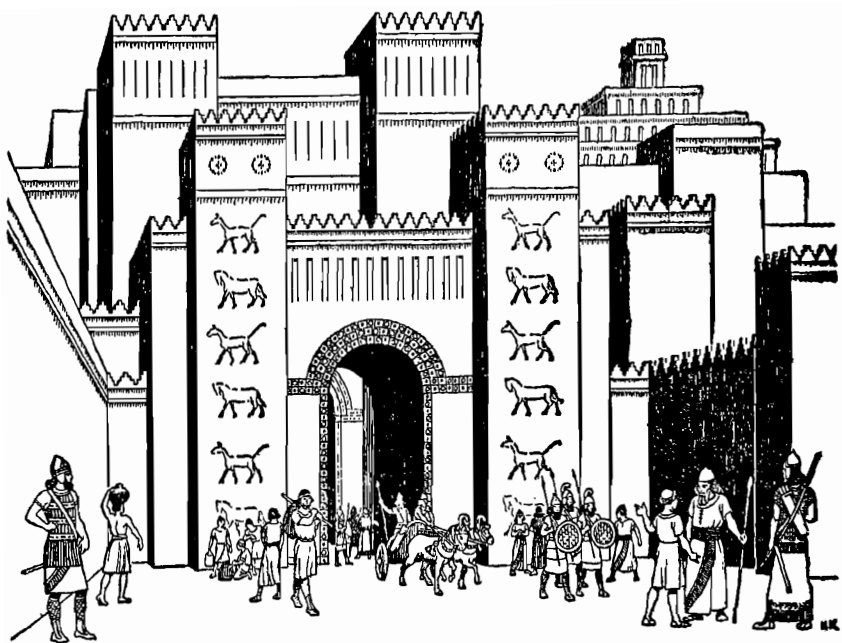
<sup>1</sup>Archer, Gleason G., Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p. 394

<sup>2</sup>Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, p. 469

# THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

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Miles





*Babylon—The City of the Captivity*



## II. THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM (10:1-36:21)

### 1. JEROBOAM'S REVOLUTION (Chapter 10)

#### TEXT

Chapter 10:1. And Rehoboam went to Shechem; for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king. 2. And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it (for he was in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of king Solomon), that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt. 3. And they sent and called him; and Jeroboam and all Israel came, and they spake to Rehoboam, saying, 4. "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." 5. And he said unto them, "Come again unto me after three days." And the people departed.

6. And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, "What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people?" 7. And they spake unto him, saying, "If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever." 8. But he forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, and took counsel with the young men that were grown up with him, that stood before him. 9. And he said unto them, "What counsel give ye, that ye may return answer to this people, who have spoken to me, saying, 'Make the yoke that thy father did put upon us lighter'?" 10. And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, "Thus shalt thou say unto the people that spake unto thee, saying, 'Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us;' thus shalt thou say unto them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. 11. 'And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.' "

12. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king bade, saying, "Come to me again the third day." 13. And the king answered them roughly; and king

Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men, 14. and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add thereto: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." 15. So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was brought about of God, that Jehovah might establish his word, which he spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16. And when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." So all Israel departed unto their tents. 17. But as the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. 18. Then king Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who was over the men subject to taskwork; and the children of Israel stoned him to death with stones. And king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. 19. So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 10:1. All the leaders of Israel came to Shechem for Rehoboam's coronation. 2, 3. Meanwhile, friends of Jeroboam (son of Nebat) sent word to him of Solomon's death. He was in Egypt at the time, where he had gone to escape from King Solomon. He now quickly returned, and was present at the coronation, and led the people's demands on Rehoboam: 4. "Your father was a hard master," they said. "Be easier on us than he was, and we will let you be our king!" 5. Rehoboam told them to return in three days for his decision.

6. He discussed their demand with the old men who had counseled his father Solomon. "What shall I tell them?" he asked. 7. "If you want to be their king," they replied, "you will have to give them a favorable reply and treat them with kindness." 8, 9. But he rejected their advice and asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him. "What

do you fellows think I should do?" he asked. "Shall I be easier on them than my father was?" 10. "No!" they replied. "Tell them, 'If you think my father was hard on you, just wait and see what I'll be like!' Tell them 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins! 11. I am going to be tougher on you, not easier! My father used whips on you, but I'll use scorpions!' "

12. So when Jeroboam and the people returned in three days to hear King Rehoboam's decision, 13. he spoke roughly to them; for he refused the advice of the old men, 14. and followed the counsel of the younger ones. "My father gave you heavy burdens but I will give you heavier!" he told them, "My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with scorpions!" 15. So the king turned down the people's demands. (God caused him to do it in order to fulfill his prediction spoken to Jeroboam by Ahijah, the Shilonite.)

16. When the people realized what the king was saying they turned around and deserted him. "Forget David and his dynasty!" they shouted angrily. "We'll get someone else to be our king. Let Rehoboam rule his own tribe of Judah! Let's go home!" So they did. 17. The People of the tribe of Judah, however, remained loyal to Rehoboam. 18. Afterwards, when King Rehoboam sent Hadoram to draft forced labor from the other tribes of Israel, the people stoned him to death. When this news reached King Rehoboam he jumped into his chariot and fled to Jerusalem. 19. And Israel has refused to be ruled by a descendant of David to this day.

### COMMENTARY

Solomon's name meant "Peace" and described his character and the nature of his reign. Rehoboam's name meant "the people are enlarged" or "one who sets the people free." There was bound up in Rehoboam's name Solomon's hope for Israel. Rehoboam's actions contradicted the anticipation in his name. The selection of Shechem for the great national gathering was unusual. Jerusalem was the capital. The Temple was in Jerusalem. Shechem was in Ephraim about thirty miles north of Jerusalem. Whether Rehoboam went there by choice or was

advised by the people that this was where they would meet him is not clear. The people of Israel gathered there to make him king if he would meet their conditions.

When Ahijah had revealed to Jeroboam that Jehovah would give him ten parts of the kingdom (I Kings 11:31), Jeroboam conspired to take the throne from Solomon. The conspiracy failed. Jeroboam was able to find refuge in Egypt where he remained until Solomon's death. Jeroboam had friends in Ephraim and other northern tribes who looked to him for leadership. In the meeting at Shechem, Jeroboam is the champion of the ten tribes. He and the elders of these tribes presented themselves before Rehoboam with their requests. Solomon's demands upon Israel had become very galling especially in the latter half of his reign. There was much wealth; but the rich became richer and the poor became poorer. Social injustice was evident throughout the kingdom. The people were burdened with excessive taxation. They had been pushed to the point of rebellion. They asked that their "heavy yoke" be made lighter. They requested a readjustment of personal responsibilities with regard to the kingdom. From a human viewpoint, Rehoboam probably could have made the necessary adjustments and the kingdom would have remained united. From Jehovah's viewpoint His purpose was that the kingdom should now be divided (I Kings 12:15). Rehoboam would rule over Judah and Jeroboam would lead the ten northern tribes. Faced with this serious request, Rehoboam promised an answer within three days. Rehoboam used the time to seek the advice of counselors. He turned to "the old men," contemporaries of Solomon. They advised that he follow a policy of kindness and consideration for the people. Even here, Jehovah was at work as Rehoboam rejected good advice. Having decided what he wanted to do, his heart was hardened as was the case with Pharaoh in Moses' day. At this time Rehoboam was forty one years old (I Kings 14:21). He turned to younger men, those of his own generation for advice. They advised him to be stern, kingly, demanding. They fed Rehoboam's ego, reminded him of his authority, sent him to the people with a proverbial



expression—"my little finger is thicker than my father's loins." The people understood that if they had found Solomon's regime burdensome, Rehoboam's would be unbearable. They could not and would not "live with scorpions." The scorpion was a creature which was able to inflict a person with a very painful sting. The term was also used as a name for a whip made of rawhide thongs to which pieces of lead were attached. Rehoboam threatened to coerce Israel and rule as a despot. When the appointed time came, the king hatefully announced his policy to the people. Verse 15 reviews Jehovah's purpose in this matter. It must be understood that Jehovah did not use Rehoboam as a pawn. What the king decided to do was, first of all his own decision. When he would not do God's will, his heart was hardened. In these matters we cannot limit Jehovah's knowledge of the past, present and future. He is omniscient. At the same time, He allows personal choice and holds man responsible for that choice.

When the people heard Rehoboam's insulting speech, they lifted up the cry of rebellion and left the scene in an angry mood. Perhaps some of the people were glad for an occasion to rebel. Others among them were perplexed. "Israel," as a name, from this time specially identified the ten northern tribes. The rebel cry, "what portion have we in David? Every man to your tents," had been heard in Sheba's rebellion against David (II Samuel 20:1). The tribes of Judah, Simeon and a part of Benjamin submitted to Rehoboam's kingship. All of the other tribes of Israel turned to Jeroboam, son of Nebat, and made him king. This was a tragic day in Hebrew history. Rehoboam made a futile attempt to bring the northern tribes under his rule. Hadoram (Adoram—I Kings 12:18) was sent to organize some forced labor or to arrange for tribute to be paid to Rehoboam. The king, Rehoboam, kept himself at a safe distance. When Hadoram was stoned to death by the rebels, Rehoboam hurried to the safety of Jerusalem. The division between Judah in the south and Israel in the north continued until the time of the Babylonian captivity.

## 2. THE REIGN OF REHOBOAM (11-12)

## TEXT

Chapter 11:1. And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled the house of Judah and Benjamin, a hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, that were warriors, to fight against Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam. 2. But the word of Jehovah came to Shemaiah the man of God saying, 3. "Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, 4. 'Thus saith Jehovah, "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house; for this thing is of me." ' ' ' So they hearkened unto the words of Jehovah, and returned from going against Jeroboam.

And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. 6. He built Beth-lehem, and Etam, and Tekoa. 7. and Beth-zur, and Soco, and Adullam, 8. and Gath, and Mareshah, and Ziph, 9. and Adoraim, and Lachish, and Azekah, 10. and Zorah, and Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and in Benjamin, fortified cities. 11. And he fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of victuals, and oil and wine. 12. And in every city he put shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong. And Judah and Benjamin belonged to him.

13. And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their border. 14. For the Levites left their suburbs and their possessions, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons cast them off, that they should not execute the priest's office unto Jehovah; 15. and he appointed him priests for the high places, and for the he-goats, and for the calves which he had made. 16. And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek Jehovah, the God Of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto Jehovah, the God of their fathers. 17. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years; for they walked three years in the way of David and Solomon.

18. And Rehoboam took him a wife, Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, and of Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse; 19. and she bare him sons: Jeush, and Shemariah, and Zaham. 20. And after her he took Maacah the daughter of Absalom; and she bare him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith. 21. And Rehoboam loved Maacah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines (for he took eighteen wives and threescore concubines, and begat twenty and eight sons and threescore daughters). 22. And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maacah to be chief, even the prince among his brethren; for he was minded to make him king. 23. And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his sons throughout all the lands of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fortified city: and he gave them victuals in abundance. And he sought for them many wives.

Chapter 12:1. And it came to pass, when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established, and he was strong, that he forsook the law of Jehovah, and all Israel with him. 2. And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had trespassed against Jehovah, 3. with twelve hundred chariots, and three-score thousand horsemen. And the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt: the Lubim, the Sukkiim, and the Ethiopians. 4. And he took the fortified cities which pertained to Judah, and came unto Jerusalem. 5. Now Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, "Thus saith Jehovah, 'Ye have forsaken me, therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.' " 6. Then the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, "Jehovah is righteous." 7. And when Jehovah saw that they humbled themselves, the word of Jehovah came to Shemaiah, saying, "They have humbled themselves: I will not destroy them; but I will grant them some deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. 8. 'Nevertheless they shall be his servants, that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the

countries.”

9. So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of Jehovah, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all away: he took away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made. 10. And king Rehoboam made in their stead shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, that kept the door of the king's house. 11. And it was so, that, as oft-as the king entered into the house of Jehovah, the guard came and bare them, and brought them back into the guard-chamber. 12. And when he humbled himself, the wrath of Jehovah turned from him, so as not to destroy him altogether: and moreover in Judah there were good things found.

13. So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which Jehovah had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there: and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. 14. And he did that which was evil, because he set not his heart to seek Jehovah.

15. Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the histories of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer, after the manner of genealogies? And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually. 16. And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Abijah his son reigned in his stead.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 11:1. Upon arrival at Jerusalem, Rehoboam mobilized the armies of Judah and Benjamin, 180,000 strong, and declared war against the rest of Israel in an attempt to reunite the kingdom. 2. But the Lord told Shemaiah the prophet, 3. “Go and say to King Rehoboam of Judah, Solomon's son, and to the people of Judah and of Benjamin: 4. “The Lord says, ‘Do not fight against your brothers. Go home, for I am behind their rebellion.’” So they obeyed the Lord and refused to fight against Jeroboam.

5-10. Rehoboam stayed in Jerusalem and fortified these cities of Judah with walls and gates to protect himself: Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. 11. He also rebuilt and strengthened the forts, and manned them with companies of soldiers under their officers, and stored them with food, olive oil, and wine. 12. Shields and spears were placed in armories in every city as a further safety measure. For only Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to him.

13, 14. However, the priests and Levites from the other tribes now abandoned their homes and moved to Judah and Jerusalem, for King Jeroboam had fired them, telling them to stop being priests of the Lord. 15. He had appointed other priests instead who encouraged the people to worship idols instead of God, and to sacrifice to carved statues of goats and calves which he placed on the hills. 16. Laymen, too, from all over Israel began moving to Jerusalem where they could freely worship the Lord God of their fathers, and sacrifice to him. 17. This strengthened the kingdom of Judah, so King Rehoboam survived for three years without difficulty; for during those years there was an earnest effort to obey the Lord as King David and King Solomon had done.

18. Rehoboam married his cousin Mahalath. She was the daughter of David's son, Jerimoth and of Abihail, the daughter of David's brother Eliab. 19. Three sons were born from this marriage—Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. 20. Later he married Maacah, the daughter of Absalom. The children she bore him were Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. 21. He loved Maacah more than any of his other wives and concubines (he had eighteen wives and sixty concubines—with twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters). 22. Maacah's son Abijah was his favorite, and he intended to make him the next king. 23. He very wisely scattered his other sons in the fortified cities throughout the land of Judah and Benjamin, and gave them large allowances and arranged for them to have several wives apiece.

Chapter 12:1. But just when Rehoboam was at the height of his popularity and power he abandoned the Lord, and the

people followed him in his sin. 2. As a result, King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem in the fifth year of King Rehoboam's reign, 3. with twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand cavalrymen and an unnumbered host of infantrymen—Egyptians, Libyans, Sukkiim, and Ethiopians. 4. He quickly conquered Judah's fortified cities and soon arrived at Jerusalem. 5. The prophet Shemaiah now met with Rehoboam and the Judean leaders from every part of the nation (they had fled to Jerusalem for safety), and told them, "The Lord says, 'You have forsaken me, so I have forsaken you and abandoned you to Shishak.' " 6. Then the king and the leaders of Israel confessed their sins and exclaimed, "The Lord is right in doing this to us!" 7. And when the Lord saw them humble themselves he sent Shemaiah to tell them, "Because you have humbled yourselves, I will not completely destroy you; some will escape. I will not use Shishak to pour out my anger upon Jerusalem. 8. But you must pay annual tribute to him. Then you will realize how much better it is to serve me than to serve him!"

9. So King Shishak of Egypt conquered Jerusalem and took away all the treasures of the Temple and of the palace, also all of Solomon's gold shields. 10. King Rehoboam replaced them with bronze shields and committed them to the care of the captain of his bodyguard. 11. Whenever the king went to the Temple, the guards would carry them, and afterwards return them to the armory. 12. When the king humbled himself, the Lord's anger was turned aside and he didn't send total destruction; in fact, even after Shishak's invasion, the economy of Judah remained strong.

13. King Rehoboam reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city God had chosen as his residence after considering all the other cities of Israel. He had become king at the age of forty-one, and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. 14. But he was an evil king, for he never did decide really to please the Lord.

15. The complete biography of Rehoboam is recorded in the histories written by Shemaiah the prophet and by Iddo the seer, and in The Genealogical Register. There were continual

wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. 16. When Rehoboam died he was buried in Jerusalem, and his son Abijah became the new king.

### COMMENTARY

Rehoboam decided to use military power against the northern tribes to bring them under subjection. The murder of Hadoram was a defiant rejection of Rehoboam's authority. One hundred and eighty thousand warriors out of the south were readied for this civil war between Judah and Israel. Jehovah had determined that the division between Judah and Israel should be accomplished at this time. Shemaiah is called a prophet and a "man of God." There are references to many false prophets in the Old Testament; but one never meets a false "man of God." In II Chronicles 12:5 Shemaiah declared the word of Jehovah to Rehoboam concerning Shishak and the Egyptians. Shemaiah also is credited with writing the history of the life and times of Rehoboam (II Chronicles 12:15). When Rehoboam faced this crisis and was about to send this large army into Israel, Jehovah sent Shemaiah to the king of Judah and all the people who submitted to his reign. Jehovah's word was, "Dismiss this army." The statement, "This thing is of me," underscored the divine purpose. Rehoboam and his people obeyed Jehovah in this matter.

A brief summary of Rehoboam's reign follows. Probably because he feared threats against the security of Judah especially from Egypt, he fortified several villages in Judah and Benjamin. The relative locations of the villages which concerned the king are indicated here.

Bethlehem — About five miles south of Jerusalem; Etham — Ten miles west of Hebron, Tekoa — Seven miles south east of Bethlehem, Beth-zur — Five miles north of Hebron, Soco — Thirteen miles west of Bethlehem, Adullam — Fourteen miles north west of Hebron, Gath — Twenty miles north west of Hebron, Mareshah — Fifteen miles north west of Hebron, Ziph — Four miles south of Hebron, Adoraim — Five miles west of Hebron, Lachish — Twenty miles west of Hebron, Azekah —

Ten miles north west of Hebron, Hebron — Twenty miles south of Jerusalem, Zorah — Fifteen miles west of Jerusalem, Aijalon — Thirteen miles north west of Jerusalem. The distances stated here are not measured with absolute accuracy. The key cities were Jerusalem and Hebron. All of these villages were equipped with soldiers, weapons, and food supplies.

Verses 13-17 describe the migration of priests and Levites into the southern kingdom. The primary reason for this development was Jeroboam's rejection of Jehovah worship. Jeroboam was Jehovah's choice to be king of Israel. He certainly had the potential to become an effective leader. According to I Kings 11:26-28, Jeroboam had been a servant of Solomon. He had charge over the house of Joseph in the fortification of Jerusalem, working on the citadel of Millo. He was described as a very industrious person and as a mighty man of valor. He had the credentials to become a great king; but when the time came for his kingdom to be set up, he feared Rehoboam and his efforts to unify the kingdom. Jeroboam set up Baal worship in Bethel (southern border of his kingdom) and Dan (northern frontier of the kingdom). He determined to make religion convenient for his people. He did not want them to return to the Temple in Jerusalem. He made priests out of any who wanted to serve without regard to Levitical connection (I Kings 12:28-33). He changed the date for the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles from the seventh month and the fifteenth day to the eighth month and the fifteenth day. He set up idolatry throughout his kingdom. Reacting to these developments, priests and Levites and a remnant of representatives from the northern tribes moved into Judah and the southern kingdom. This influx of Hebrews with deep religious convictions provided a certain stability to Rehoboam's government for about three years. Even Rehoboam himself, ruled wisely through these fleeting months. "The way of David and Solomon" in this context refers to a genuine concern for Jehovah's will.

II Chronicles 12:1 reports Rehoboam's forsaking the law of Jehovah. His subjects made no attempt to put him off the



throne. They followed his leadership. Rehoboam married Mahalath who was the daughter of Jerimoth, son of David. In the lists of David's sons Jerimoth is not named. He could have been the son of one of David's concubines. "Jerimoth" could have been another name for Ithream who is listed among David's sons. Abihail was a second cousin to Mahalath and she was also Mahalath's mother. Eliab was Jesse's eldest son. The sons of Rehoboam through Mahalath were Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. Rehoboam also married Maacah who was Absalom's grand-daughter. Maacah's mother was Tamar, Absalom's daughter. The relationships of "son" and "daughter" are not always used as exactly as we use them. They do indicate a direct lineal descent. Absalom was David's rebel son. Rehoboam's sons through Maacah were Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. Rehoboam broke Jehovah's law respecting Hebrew kings and the multiplication of wives (Deuteronomy 17:17). He went his own way. Eighteen wives, sixty concubines, twenty eight sons, and sixty daughters composed the king's harem and family. Of all the wives, he loved Maacah best. Her son, Abijah, was groomed by Rehoboam to be his successor of Judah's throne. Rehoboam demonstrated human wisdom in placing his sons in positions of trust throughout the kingdom and in making liberal material provisions for them. Rehoboam failed Jehovah and would have to suffer the consequences of his failures.

### SUMMARY QUESTIONS

#### LESSON SIXTEEN II Chronicles, Chapters 9-11

567. What was the basic reason for the visit of the queen of Sheba?
568. Carefully locate Sheba.
569. What did the queen bring with her?
570. How was she received by Solomon?
571. List the particulars which were carefully observed by the queen of Sheba.

- 572. Explain the reference to the "ascent" in 9:4.
- 573. How did the queen of Sheba express her evaluation of Solomon's world?
- 574. What did the queen say about Jehovah?
- 575. How was the material from the algum trees used?
- 576. What did Solomon do for the queen of Sheba?
- 577. How much gold annually was coming into Solomon's treasury?
- 578. What is a buckler?
- 579. Where was much of this gold placed?
- 580. Describe Solomon's throne.
- 581. Why were lions used?
- 582. What does this record say regarding the use of gold and silver?
- 583. Carefully locate Tarshish.
- 584. Why would apes and peacocks be imported?
- 585. Why did many kings seek an audience with Solomon?
- 586. What did Solomon do with horses?
- 587. How extensive was Solomon's kingdom?
- 588. Explain the reference to "silver as stones" and "cedars as sycamore trees"
- 589. Name the persons who wrote Solomon's history. Identify these persons carefully.
- 590. How long did Solomon reign?
- 591. Where was Solomon buried?
- 592. Who succeeded Solomon on the throne of Israel?
- 593. Locate Shechem and indicate why Rehoboam went to that place.
- 594. Who was Jeroboam?
- 595. Why was Jeroboam in Egypt?
- 596. What petition did the Israelites present to Rehoboam?
- 597. Why did Rehoboam request a three day interval?
- 598. Summarize the counsel of the young men.

599. Summarize the word of the experienced counselors.
600. Describe the proverbial expression in 10:10.
601. What is a scorpion?
602. What did Rehoboam tell the people at the appointed meeting?
603. Why did Rehoboam take this course of action?
604. Who was Ahijah?
605. Locate another incident when the question was asked, "What portion have we in David"?
606. Name the tribe over which Rehoboam retained control.
607. Identify Hadoram and explain what happened with regard to him.
608. Upon returning to Jerusalem what was Rehoboam's first action?
609. Carefully identify Shemaiah.
610. Explain the phrase in 11:4, "for this thing is of me".
611. Locate Bethlehem and Tekoa.
612. Locate Gath and Hebron.
613. Name the two tribes which were in the Southern Kingdom.
614. Why was there a mass movement of the Levites to the Southern Kingdom?
615. Who appointed priests for the high places?
616. What kind of influence did the Levites have on the Southern Kingdom?
617. How many wives and concubines belonged to Rehoboam?
618. Who was the mother of Abijah?
619. How did Rehoboam use his sons?

## LESSON SEVENTEEN 12-14

### EGYPT INVADES ISRAEL, JEROBOAM, AND THE NORTHERN KINGDOM ASA AND THE ETHIOPIANS.

#### 2. THE REIGN OF REHOBAM—Continued (11-12)

##### INTRODUCTION

The shields of gold were exchanged for shields of brass as Rehoboam had trouble with the Egyptians. Jeroboam set up the golden calves and led his people away from God. Asa, king of Judah, blessed by Jehovah, repulsed an Ethiopian attack.

##### TEXT

(Scripture text in Lesson Sixteen)

##### PARAPHRASE

(Scripture text in Lesson Sixteen)

##### COMMENTARY

Three chapters in this record describe the life and times of Rehoboam. His kingship covered a very critical period in Hebrew history. Solomon's sins and Rehoboam's foolishness brought Israel to a tragic turning point resulting in the division of the kingdom. In the early part of his reign Rehoboam showed some concern for the genuine Hebrew religion. The presence of the Temple in Jerusalem and the migration of priests and Levites into the borders of Judah were beneficial in this regard. Chapter 12:1 describes Rehoboam's course of action. He established his kingdom, fortified numerous villages, set up an extensive harem, made expensive provisions for his children and "forsook the law of Jehovah." If what he had done would have affected only himself, the results would not have been so serious. All of his people followed the leadership of the king. About 925 B.C. Jehovah allowed Shishak, king of Egypt, to come into Judah with a great army. Jeroboam, king of Israel, had found refuge in Egypt under Shishak (I Kings 11:40). As the Egyptians came into Rehoboam's territory at this time they

intended to take Jerusalem. Rehoboam and his people "Had trespassed against Jehovah" (verse 2). They had forsaken God (verse 5). Shishak brought allies with him. The Lubim were the Libyan people who lived on the northern coast of Africa. The Sukkiim probably were Arabs living in North Africa. The Ethiopians lived within the limits of Shishak's territory as Ethiopia bordered Egypt on the south. The enemy came with twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen, and an army of foot soldiers that was not numbered. Without opposition Shishak took all of the villages in Judah (11:5-12) which had been fortified against such an invasion.

Again, the history of Judah was delicately balanced. Shemaiah, the prophet who had told Jeroboam that he would be a king, appeared before Rehoboam and his princes to charge them with forsaking Jehovah. God's great mercy was exercised once more. Rehoboam and his counselors were convicted of their sins and confessed the "righteousness" of Jehovah's judgment. Jehovah's decision not to bring Judah to a full end was communicated to Shemaiah who, most likely, made this known to the king. However, Rehoboam and his people would have to pay tribute to Egypt and through this they should know that they were being judged for their sins against Jehovah. God did not grant permanent immunity to Jerusalem. He said that Shishak would not destroy the city. When Jehovah's people humble themselves, He forgives (7:14).

In the days of David and Solomon the treasures of the nations poured into Jerusalem. This happy circumstance was reversed in the days of Rehoboam. Shishak would have taken Jerusalem at this time if Jehovah had allowed him to do so and if the Hebrew leaders had not been able to buy temporary freedom with the treasures. Some of the precious things were brought out of the Temple and some out of other buildings where they were housed. The diminishing glory of the kingdom is most graphically described in the exchange of shields of gold for shields of brass. Solomon had fashioned the golden shields (9:15, 16) to demonstrate the wealth and splendor of his kingdom. Those who knew this former glory surely were heart

broken when they had to look upon Rehoboam's shields of brass. The glory had departed. The self-humiliation of the king was the only redeeming consideration. There were still some people in Judah who loved God; but the spiritual climate was far from ideal.

Rehoboam was more concerned about making a name for himself as a king than he was about being a spiritual leader for his people. His reign of seventeen years offered many opportunities for him to strive for the ideal established in Deuteronomy 17:14-20. He was forty one years old when he became king. He had a remarkable heritage. In large measure Rehoboam failed. He did not "set his heart to seek Jehovah."

Shemaiah and Iddo prepared written accounts of Rehoboam's reign. There was constant civil strife between the southern and the northern kingdoms. Rehoboam was buried in the royal cemetery established in David's day. He was succeeded on the throne by his son, Abijah.

### 3. THE REIGN OF ABIJAH. (Chapter 13)

#### TEXT

Chapter 13:1. In the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. 2. Three years reigned he in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Micaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. 3. And Abijah joined battle with an army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men: and Jeroboam set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, who were mighty men of valor. 4. And Abijah stood up upon Mount Zemaraim, which is in the hill-country of Ephraim, and said, "Hear me, O Jeroboam and all Israel: 5. "Ought ye not to know that Jehovah, the God of Israel, gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? 6. "Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up, and rebelled against his lord. 7. And there were gathered unto him worthless men, base fellows, that strengthened themselves

against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them. 8. "And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of Jehovah in the hand of the sons of David; and ye are a great multitude, and there are with you the golden calves which Jeroboam made you for gods. 9. "Have ye not driven out the priests of Jehovah, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made you priests after the manner of the peoples of other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods. 10. "But as for us, Jehovah is our God, and we have not forsaken him; and we have priests ministering unto Jehovah, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites in their work: 11. "and they burn unto Jehovah every morning and every evening burnt-offerings and sweet incense: the showbread also set they in order upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of Jehovah our God; but ye have forsaken him. 12. "And, behold, God is with us at our head, and his priests with the trumpets of alarm to sound an alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against Jehovah, the God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper."

13. But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them. 14. And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle was before and behind them; and they cried unto Jehovah, and the priests sounded with the trumpets. 15. Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. 16. And the children of Israel fled before Judah; and God delivered them into their hand. 17. And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men. 18. Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon Jehovah, the God of their fathers. 19. And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him, Beth-el with the

towns thereof, and Jashanah with the towns thereof, and Ephron with the towns thereof. 20. Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again the days of Abijah: and Jehovah smote him, and he died. 21. But Abijah waxed mighty, and took unto himself fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons, and sixteen daughters. 22. And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the commentary of the prophet Iddo.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 13:1. Abijah became the new king of Judah, in Jerusalem, in the eighteenth year of the reign of King Jeroboam of Israel. He lasted three years. His mother's name was Micaiah (daughter of Uriel of Gibeah). Early in his reign war broke out between Judah and Israel. 3. Judah, led by King Abijah, fielded 400,000 seasoned warriors against twice as many Israeli troops—strong, courageous men led by King Jeroboam. 4. When the army of Judah arrived at Mount Zemaraim, in the hill country of Ephraim, King Abijah shouted to King Jeroboam and the Israeli army: 5. "Listen! Don't you realize that the Lord God of Israel swore that David's descendants would always be the kings of Israel; 6. Your King Jeroboam is a mere servant of David's son, and was a traitor to his master. 7. Then a whole gang of worthless rebels joined him, defying Solomon's son Rehoboam, for he was young and frightened and couldn't stand up to them. 8. Do you really think you can defeat the kingdom of the Lord that is led by a descendant of David? Your army is twice as large as mine, but you are cursed with those gold calves you have with you, that Jeroboam made for you—he calls them your gods! 9. And you have driven away the priests of the Lord and the Levites, and have appointed heathen priests instead. Just like the people of other lands, you accept as priests anybody who comes along with a young bullock and seven rams for consecration. Anyone at all can be a priest of these no-gods of yours! 10. "But as for us, the Lord is our God and we have not forsaken him. Only the descendants of Aaron are our priests, and the Levites alone may help them in their work. 11. They burn sacrifices to the Lord every morning and evening—burnt offerings and sweet



incense; and they place the Bread of the Presence upon the holy table. The golden lampstand is lighted every night, for we are careful to follow the instructions of the Lord our God; but you have forsaken him. 12. So you see, God is with us; he is our Leader. His priests, trumpeting as they go, will lead us into battle against you. O people of Israel, do not fight against the Lord God of your fathers, for you will not succeed!"

13, 14. Meanwhile, Jeroboam had secretly sent part of his army around behind the men of Judah to ambush them; so Judah was surrounded, with the enemy before and behind them. Then they cried out to the Lord for mercy, and the priests blew the trumpets. 15, 16. The men of Judah began to shout. And as they shouted, God used King Abijah and the men of Judah to turn the tide of battle against King Jeroboam and the army of Israel, 17. and they slaughtered 500,000 elite troops of Israel that day. 18, 19. So Judah, depending upon the Lord God of their fathers, defeated Israel, and chased King Jeroboam's troops, and captured some of his cities—Bethel, Jeshanah, Ephron, and their suburbs. 20. King Jeroboam of Israel never regained his power during Abijah's lifetime, and eventually the Lord struck him and he died. 21. Meanwhile, King Abijah of Judah became very strong. He married fourteen wives and had twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. 22. His complete biography and speeches are recorded in the prophet Iddo's History of Judah.

### COMMENTARY

I Kings 15:1-8 records the brief reign of Abijah emphasizing his military conflict with Jeroboam, king of Israel. Twenty two verses in II Chronicles, chapter thirteen, give attention to Abijah's life and times. Jeroboam's reign continued through twenty two years. Three kings were to reign in Judah in Jeroboam's time. There were Rehoboam, Abijah, and Asa. Late in Jeroboam's reign (the 18th year) Abijah began his reign in the sister kingdom. II Chronicles 11:22 names Maacah as Abijah's mother. Here his mother is named Micaiah. Uriel of Gibeah may be identified as the husband of Tamar, Absalom's

daughter. Absalom was grandfather of Abijah's mother.

The reasons for military conflict between Judah and Israel are not carefully traced in this record. Jeroboam was determined to guard his position as king and to prevent any effort to unify the two kingdoms. He may have attempted to enlarge his territory and move into areas occupied by the southern kingdom. Abijah was concerned to maintain his position in Judah and he had the assurance that from a religious viewpoint his military involvement was justified. Jeroboam drew up an army of eight hundred thousand men. Abijah countered the move by drawing up an army of four hundred thousand men. In the reign between Bethel and the Jordan river in the mountains of Ephraim at a place called Mount Zemaraim Abijah made a dramatic plea to Jeroboam and the representatives of the northern kingdom. Apparently he asked to be heard not because Judah was outnumbered, but because there were deep national and religious ties which civil strife would violate.

Jehovah's promise to David (II Samuel 7) was a basic consideration. "A covenant of salt" was one that could not be broken. Certainly, Jehovah would never break such a pact. Abijah reminded Jeroboam that he was a servant to Solomon, yet he had dared to try to take Solomon's throne. The king of Judah charged the king of Israel with folly in that he had gathered around him men who were empty headed and wicked. Abijah excused his father, Rehoboam, as being young and inexperienced in matters of government. Rehoboam was forty one years of age when he became king and he did not demonstrate gentleness in his dealings with the people at Shechem. Abijah was deeply concerned that Jeroboam would not recognize the sanctity of the Davidic line. "You withstand the kingdom of Jehovah in the hand of the sons of David." (Verse 8)

As if he were a prophet, Abijah, called attention to Israel's golden calves and to the general disregard for the priests and Levites. Like Elijah on Mount Carmel, Abijah affirmed Judah's confidence in Jehovah. He reminded Jeroboam and the Israelites that the priests and Levites were serving in Judah by

divine appointment and with government approval. All of the regular services were being observed in the Temple. The burning of the incense, the morning and evening sacrifices, the showbread (twelve loaves—all Israel) regularly placed on the table designed for this purpose, the golden candlesticks lighted every evening constituted Abijah's proof that Judah had not forsaken Jehovah. In righteous wrath Judah's king leveled this charge at the northern kingdom—"but ye have forsaken Him (Jehovah)" (verse 11). If there was to be civil war, Abijah said it would be a holy war. "The trumpets of alarm" may well have been the silver trumpets appointed to the priests at Sinai (Numbers 10:1). If Jeroboam dared to go to war under these conditions, he was warned that he would be fighting against Jehovah.

In spite of his eloquent appeal and of the basic spiritual considerations, Jeroboam lost no time in joining the battle. Probably while Abijah was speaking, Jeroboam planned the strategy of the attack. While Judah's attention was diverted, a large division of Israel's soldiers moved behind Abijah's army to set an ambush. Caught between the ranks of the enemy, all that Judah could do was to call upon Jehovah for help and then proceed to attack. The sounding of the trumpets and the soldiers' shouts remind us of the overthrow of Jericho (Joshua 6). Miraculously Jehovah gave Abijah and Judah a great military victory. Israel lost five hundred thousand warriors (verse 17). Admittedly, this was a very large number, but this is the record. On one occasion Shennacherib, king of Assyria, lost one hundred eighty five thousand warriors in one night (II Kings 19:35). There is no estimate as to how many Egyptian soldiers perished in the trap of the Red Sea when Jehovah brought Israel out of Egypt. This was a serious defeat for Jeroboam. Not long after this event his reign ended in shame with Abijah's prediction of the extinction of Jeroboam's house. Certain villages in Ephraim were annexed to the southern kingdom. Abijah's accomplishments were attributed to his reliance on Jehovah. Jeroboam's death resulted from his having been smitten by Jehovah. Even though Abijah had made his

impassioned speech on Mount Zemaraim, he was not careful to follow Jehovah in every matter. Fourteen wives, twenty two sons, and sixteen daughters composed his household. The prophet, Iddo, wrote an account of Abijah's life and times.

#### 4. THE REIGN OF ASA (14 - 16)

##### TEXT

Chapter 14:1. So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David; and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years. 2. And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of Jehovah his God: 3. for he took away the foreign altars, and the high places, and brake down the pillars, and hewed down the Asherim, 4. and commanded Judah to seek Jehovah, the God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. 5. Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the sun-images: and the kingdom was quiet before him. 6. And he built fortified cities in Judah; for the land was quiet, and he had no war in those years, because Jehovah had given him rest. 7. For he said unto Judah, "Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars; the land is yet before us, because we have sought Jehovah our God; we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side," So they built and prospered. 8. And Asa had an army that bare bucklers and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these were mighty men of valor.

9. And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an army of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and he came unto Mareshah. 10. Then Asa went out to meet him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. 11. And Asa cried unto Jehovah his God, and said, "Jehovah, there is none besides thee to help, between the mighty and him that hath no strength: help us, O Jehovah our God; for we rely on thee, and in thy name are we come against this multitude. O Jehovah, thou art our God; let

not man prevail against thee." 12. So Jehovah smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. 13. And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them unto Gerar: and there fell of the Ethiopians so many that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before Jehovah, and before his host; and they carried away very much booty. 14. And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; for the fear of Jehovah came upon them: and they despoiled all the cities; for there was much spoil in them. 15. They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep in abundance, and camels, and returned to Jerusalem.

Chapter 15:1. And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: 2. and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, "Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Jehovah is with you, while ye are with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you. 3. "Now for a long season Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law: 4. "but when in their distress they turned unto Jehovah, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them. 5. "And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in; but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the lands. 6. "And they were broken in pieces, nation against nation, and city against city; for God did vex them with all adversity. 7. "But be ye strong, and let not your hands be slack; for your work shall be rewarded."

And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominations out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from the hill-country of Ephraim; and he renewed the altar of Jehovah, that was before the porch of Jehovah. 9. And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and them that sojourned with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw Jehovah his God was with him. 10. So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. 11.

And they sacrificed unto Jehovah in that day, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. 12. And they entered into the covenant to seek Jehovah, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul; 13. and that whosoever would not seek Jehovah, the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. 14. And they swore unto Jehovah with a loud voice, and with shouting and with trumpets, and with cornets. 15. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and Jehovah gave them rest round about.

16. And also Maacah, the mother of Asa the king, he removed from being queen, because she had made an abominable image for an Asherah and Asa cut down her image, and made dust of it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron. 17. But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days. 18. And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels. 19. And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.

Chapter 16:1. In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any one to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. 2. Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of Jehovah and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-hadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, 3. "There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me." 4. And Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the store-cities of Naphtali. 5. And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building Ramah, and let his work cease. 6. Then Asa the king took all

Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah.

7. And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, "Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and hast not relied on Jehovah thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thy hand. 8. "Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim a huge host, with chariots and horsemen exceeding many? yet, because thou didst rely on Jehovah, he delivered them into thy hand. 9. "For the eyes of Jehovah run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; for from henceforth thou shalt have wars." 10. Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in the prison-house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time.

11. And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 12. And in the thirty and ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet; his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to Jehovah, but to the physicians. 13. And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign. 14. And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had hewn out for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odors and divers kinds of spices prepared by the perfumers' art: and they made a very great burning for him.

### PARAPHRASE

Chapter 14:1. King Abijah was buried in Jerusalem. Then his son Asa became the new king of Judah, and there was peace in the land for the first ten years of his reign, 2. for Asa was careful to obey the Lord his God. 3. He demolished the heathen altars on the hills, and broke down the obelisks, and chopped down the shameful Asherim-idols, 4. and demanded that the entire nation obey the commandments of the Lord God of their

ancestors. 5. Also, he removed the sun-images from the hills, and the incense altars from every one of Judah's cities. That is why God gave his kingdom peace. 6. This made it possible for him to build walled cities throughout Judah. 7. "Now is the time to do it, while the Lord is blessing us with peace because of our obedience to him," he told his people. "Let us build and fortify cities now, with walls, towers, gates, and bars," So they went ahead with these projects very successfully. 8. King Asa's Judean army was 300,000 strong, equipped with light shields and spears. His army of Benjaminites numbered 280,000, armed with large shields and bows. Both armies were composed of well-trained, brave men.

9, 10. But now he was attacked by an army of 1,000,000 troops from Ethiopia with 300 chariots, under the leadership of General Zerah. They advanced to the city of Mareshah, in the valley of Zephathah, and king Asa sent his troops to meet them there. 11. "O Lord," he cried out to God, "no one else can help us! Here we are, powerless against this mighty army. Oh, help us, Lord our God! For we trust in you alone to rescue us, and in your name we attack this vast horde. Don't let mere men defeat you!" 12. Then the Lord defeated the Ethiopians, and Asa and the army of Judah triumphed as the Ethiopians fled. 13. They chased them as far as Gerar, and the entire Ethiopian army was wiped out so that not one man remained; for the Lord and his army destroyed them all. Then the army of Judah carried off vast quantities of plunder. 14. While they were at Gerar they attacked all the cities in that area, and terror from the Lord came upon the residents. As a result additional vast quantities of plunder were collected from these cities too. 15. They not only plundered the cities, but destroyed the cattle tents and captured great herds of sheep and camels before finally returning to Jerusalem.

Chapter 15:1. Then the spirit of God came upon Azariah (son of Oded), 2. and he went out to meet King Asa as he was returning from the battle. "Listen to me, Asa! Listen, armies of Judah and Benjamin!" he shouted. "The Lord will stay with you as long as you stay with him! Whenever you look for him,



you will find him. But if you forsake him, he will forsake you. 3. For a long time now, over in Israel, the people haven't worshiped the true God, and have not had a true priest to teach them. They have lived without God's laws. 4. But whenever they have turned again to the Lord God of Israel in their distress, and searched for him, he has helped them. 5. In their times of rebellion against God there was no peace. Problems troubled the nation on every hand. Crime was on the increase everywhere. 6. There were external wars, and internal fighting of city against city, for God was plaguing them with all sorts of trouble. 7. But you men of Judah, keep up the good work and don't get discouraged, for you will be rewarded."

8. When King Asa heard this message from God, he took courage and destroyed all the idols in the land of Judah and Benjamin, and in the cities he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim, and he rebuilt the altar of the Lord in front of the Temple. 9. Then he summoned all the people of Judah and Benjamin, and the immigrants from Israel (for many had come from the territories of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, in Israel, when they saw that the Lord God was with King Asa). 10. They all came to Jerusalem in June of the fifteenth year of King Asa's reign, 11. and sacrificed to the Lord seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep—it was part of the plunder they had captured in the battle. 12. Then they entered into a contract to worship only the Lord God of their fathers, 13. and agreed that anyone who refused to do this must die—whether old or young, man or woman. 14. They shouted out their oath of loyalty to God with trumpets blaring and horns sounding. 15. All were happy for this covenant with God, for they had entered into it with all their hearts and wills, and wanted him above everything else, and they found him! and he gave them peace throughout the nation.

16. King Asa even removed his mother Maacah from being the queen mother because she made an Asherah-idol; he cut down the idol and crushed and burned it at Kidron Brook. 17. Over in Israel the idol-temples were not removed. But here in Judah and Benjamin the heart of King Asa was perfect before

God throughout his lifetime. 18. He brought back into the Temple the silver and gold bowls which he and his father had dedicated to the Lord. 19. So there was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of King Asa's reign.

Chapter 16:1. In the thirty-sixth year of King Asa's reign. King Baasha of Israel declared war on him and built the fortress of Ramah in order to control the road to Judah. 2. Asa's response was to take the silver and gold from the Temple and from the palace, and to send it to King Ben-hadad of Syria, at Damascus, with this message: 3. "Let us renew the mutual security pact that there was between your father and my father. See, here is silver and gold to induce you to break your alliance with King Baasha of Israel, so that he will leave me alone." 4. Ben-hadad agreed to King Asa's request and mobilized his armies to attack Israel. They destroyed the cities of Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim and all of the supply centers in Naphtali. 5. As soon as King Baasha of Israel heard what was happening, he discontinued building Ramah and gave up his plan to attack Judah. 6. Then King Asa and the people of Judah went out to Ramah and carried away the building stones and timbers and used them to build Geba and Mizpah instead.

7. About that time the prophet Hanani came to King Asa and told him, "Because you have put your trust in the king of Syria instead of in the Lord your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped from you. 8. Don't you remember what happened to the Ethiopians and Libyans and their vast army, with all of their chariots and cavalymen? But you relied then on the Lord, and he delivered them all into your hand. 9. For the eyes of the Lord search back and forth across the whole earth, looking for people whose hearts are perfect toward him, so that he can show his great power in helping them. What a fool you have been; From now on you shall have wars." 10. Asa was so angry with the prophet for saying this that he threw him into jail. And Asa oppressed all the people at that time.

11. The rest of the biography of Asa is written in The Annals of the Kings of Israel and Judah. 12. In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became seriously diseased in his feet but

he didn't go to the Lord with the problem, but to the doctors. 13, 14. So he died in the forty-first year of his reign, and was buried in his own vault that he had hewn out for himself in Jerusalem. He was laid on a bed perfumed with sweet spices and ointments, and his people made a very great burning of incense for him at his funeral.

### COMMENTARY

Asa, the son Abijah, succeeded his father on the throne in Judah. The military activity of Abijah in the civil strife with Jeroboam and the northern kingdom brought a brief period (ten years) of comparative peace to Judah. Certain alliances between the southern kingdom and Syria had been established (I Kings 15:19). It is possible that Asa became king when he was quite young. He reigned for forty one years. Verses 1-8 describe the first ten years of Asa's reign. He launched a religious reformation. Jehovah's will was the primary consideration. Strange gods had been carried into Judah along with all of the related idolatrous ritual. There was but one genuine altar for religious sacrifices. It was located in the Temple. "The foreign altars," by Asa's command, were to be destroyed. "The high places" were sometimes established on a natural elevation. On occasion devotees of a god would expend much labor to prepare a place suitable for the worship of the idol. The term "pillar" may mean an obelisk, a four sided post tapering as it rises and terminating in a pyramid. A "pillar" may simply refer to an image designed for worship. The Asherim were fashioned like poles or posts and sometimes were set up as groves of trees. The word is the plural for "Asherah" which was the female counterpart for Baal. Any reference to the Asherim immediately involved the Baalistic fertility cult. The "sun images" were made in the form of a pyramid and were often located in very prominent positions in the temples of Baal. They probably combined expressions of worship both of Baal and of the sun. In the days of Ahaz, king of Judah, shrines dedicated to sun worship were built in Jerusalem. These were equipped with priests, priestesses, horses and chariots (II Kings 21:3-6). Asa

indicated his intentions to be a worthy successor of David by clearing out all of the idolatrous establishments. When the land was well saturated with the furniture of paganism and when the people had so widely adopted heathen worship, a complete reformation was impossible. Asa "commanded Judah to seek Jehovah." He was urgent about the matter. Jehovah rewarded Asa's good faith. "The land was quiet; Jehovah had given him rest." The king busied himself with fortifying the villages in Judah. He encouraged his people as he said, "the land is yet before us." The tribe of Judah provided an army of three hundred thousand men trained to carry spears and shields. The tribe of Benjamin equipped two hundred eighty thousand archers. The raising of this large army indicated that the peaceful days would soon be past.

Asa was soon called upon to do battle with the Ethiopians.<sup>1</sup> This attack probably came about 900 B.C. Zerah was a Cushite who had a great army of about one million foot soldiers supported by three hundred chariots. He brought this army into the country of Judah to Mareshah which lay about twelve miles northwest of Hebrón. This is the same Mareshah of which Micah spoke (Micah 1:15). Asa's military forces were ill-equipped to engage this great host out of Ethiopia. Asa demonstrated his true metal when he "cried unto Jehovah his God." The king admitted Judah's helplessness apart from Jehovah. He confidently believed that Judah's God could scatter the enemy and he appealed for Jehovah to prove once more that no enemy of Jehovah could prevail as he contested Jehovah's righteous reign. The historian sets the record in proper perspective when he writes, "so Jehovah smote the Ethiopians."

Gerar lay some twenty miles south west of Mareshah. With the Ethiopians in full retreat, Asa's army took full advantage of the situation. The enemy was "broken before Jehovah." Asa's army was able to recapture much that the enemy had taken and the people of the southern kingdom returned loaded with the spoils of battle. The villages around Gerar were on the south west border of the Judah country. Asa took advantage of this

<sup>1</sup>Cook, F. C., *The Bible Commentary*, I Samuel-Esther, p. 390

military exercise as he spoiled these border villages and took with him cattle, sheep, and camels. The victory march back to Jerusalem must have been one of the truly happy occasions of Asa's reign.

### SUMMARY QUESTIONS

#### LESSON SEVENTEEN 12-14

620. What did Rehoboam do about the law of Jehovah?
621. Who was Shishak and why did he appear in Jerusalem?
622. How numerous was the army that challenged Rehoboam?
623. Who was Shemaiah and what did he say?
624. What were the effects of the repentance of the leaders of Judah?
625. With regard to Jerusalem, what was Shishak able to do?
626. Explain the reference to Solomon's shields of gold.
627. Who was Rehoboam's mother?
628. How long did he reign over Judah?
629. Who wrote accounts of Rehoboam's reign?
630. What was the usual relationship between Rehoboam and Jeroboam?
631. Who succeeded Rehoboam as king?
632. Who was the mother of the new king?
633. How many men did Abijah assemble for battle and how many did Jeroboam bring together?
634. Locate Mount Zemaraim.
635. What is a covenant of salt?
636. How does Abijah account for some of his father's failures?
637. What is Abijah's concept of the Davidic kingdom?
638. How does Abijah describe Israel's gods?
639. Who could be a priest in the Northern kingdom?
640. What does Abijah say about Jehovah worship in Jerusalem?

641. What was the nature of Abijah's request?
642. Explain Jeroboam's military maneuver.
643. How many men did Jeroboam lose in the battle? Explain this great loss.
644. Where was Bethel located? Why had this place been so important to Jeroboam?
645. What finally happened to Jeroboam?
646. Who wrote the history of Abijah?
647. Describe the reforms instituted by Asa.
648. What advice did Asa give to the people?
649. Explain Asa's concern about building cities in Judah.
650. How many men were in Asa's army?
651. How many are a thousand thousand?
652. Locate Mareshah.
653. When Asa faced this great enemy what did he do?
654. Locate Gerar.
655. What were the results of this military engagement?

## LESSON EIGHTEEN 15-17

### ASA, THE REFORMER; HANANI, MAN OF GOD. THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JEHOSEPHAT

#### 4. THE REIGN OF ASA—Continued (14-16)

##### INTRODUCTION

King Asa worked a religious reformation among his people. Asa's alliance with Syria brought the prophet's rebuke. Jehoshaphat provided good leadership for Judah.

##### TEXT

(Scripture text in Lesson Seventeen)

##### PARAPHRASE

(Scripture text in Lesson Seventeen)

##### COMMENTARY

Azariah, son of Oded, appears on the scene to bring the word of Jehovah to Asa. There are twenty eight different persons in the Old Testament named Azariah. The name "Azariah" means "Jehovah is keeper." The prophet addressed his words specifically to Judah and Benjamin. The northern kingdom is called "Israel" in verse 3. Asa's only hope was to trust Jehovah. He must go with God. He must seek the Lord. The alternative carried with it some terrible consequences. If Jehovah's people are unfaithful, He will forsake them. Those Hebrews who had been a part of the northern kingdom had suffered anguish that could not be described. God had abandoned them. There was no priest to plead their cause. They did not even have the advantage of hearing the reading of the Law. There were some Israelites who in their extremity had turned to God in deep repentance. Azariah reminded Asa that Jehovah had heard their cry. The majority of the people in the northern kingdom had been carried into captivity and there they lost their identity. Azariah told Asa that these awful sorrows could be avoided if king and people would seek Jehovah. He charged the king to be courageous and promised

that Asa's good work would be rewarded.

Azariah's ministry moved Asa to destroy all of the idols he could find in his kingdom. Verse 8 speaks of "the prophecy of Oded". Oded is mentioned here only because he was Azariah's father. The king repaired the altar of burnt offering and set it where it was supposed to be in the court of priests just in front of the Temple. The good work that Asa accomplished was advertised throughout the kingdom. From scattered places in the land of Palestine the people came to Jerusalem. Seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep were offered to Jehovah on the altar. The third month corresponds nearly with our month of May.

Jehovah's word through Azariah produced good results. As the king provided good leadership, the people were encouraged to do God's will. Once again the covenant (as in Genesis 12:1-3) was renewed. This commitment to the Lord was complete as Moses had demanded in his day (Deuteronomy 6:4, 5). Asa was so certain that his reformation was what the Lord desired that he dared to pronounce the death penalty on anyone who would not cooperate. An idolatrous city, a false prophet, or a person who worshipped idols were to be destroyed or put to death according to the Law (Deuteronomy 13). In this matter there was to be no respect of persons. Verses 14 and 15 describe what happens when God's Spirit moves His people. Azariah had come clothed in the Spirit. He shared the Spirit with Asa. The king by his strong leadership and his fear of Jehovah shared the Spirit with all of the people. They pledged themselves to the Lord. They praised Him with song and musical instruments. Peace reigned in their hearts and in their land.

If a king deprived a queen mother of her authority in the kingdom, he had to have a very good reason for his action. From Bathsheba's time the queen mother had exercised considerable power in Jerusalem. Maacah, queen mother had set up an Asherah (a pole or an obelisk) which she used in her worship of Baal. Asa dared to ruin her place of worship and to remove her from the government of Judah. Making dust out of an image reminds us of the golden calf at Sinai. The Kidron



valley had already been desecrated by heathen worship, so it was a proper place to burn this idol. Asa did what he could to work a complete reformation. He was not able to remove all idolatry because so much of it remained in the hearts of the people. He did what he could to re-establish the Temple and make it the true center of worship for Jehovah's people. He could not live long enough nor could he exercise sufficient authority to completely cleanse the people and the land. "His heart was perfect all his days". This does not mean that he made no mistakes or that he did not sin. He conscientiously tried to do God's will.

Baasha was used by Jehovah to bring the dynasty of Jeroboam to an end. Nadab, Jeroboam's son, had sinned like his father. One day Nadab was in the village of Gibbethon about twenty miles north west of Jerusalem. Baasha killed Nadab and began to reign as Israel's king (I Kings 15:25-28). Late in the reign of Asa, Baasha fortified the southern boundary of his kingdom at Ramah (about eight miles north of Jerusalem). Baasha did not want his people to have any contact with the southern kingdom. Asa was alarmed at Baasha's military action and he made a counter move in buying protection from Benhadad and the Syrians. Such alliances were contrary to Jehovah's purpose; however, Asa's move was very effective in causing Baasha to discontinue his fortifying the southern border of Israel. Once more the Temple was robbed of its treasures in order to pay the Syrians. Ben-hadad was in an agreement with Baasha. He did not hesitate to break this pact. The Syrians attacked the northern border of Baasha's kingdom at Ijon, Dan, and Abel-maim. These places were located in Naphtali not far from Mount Hermon. When Baasha learned about these border attacks, he withdrew from Ramah. Asa took advantage of the situation and used stones and timbers out of Ramah to fortify Geba and Mizpah on the north border of the southern kingdom. Geba was about ten miles north of Jerusalem in the territory of Benjamin. Mizpah was about three miles north west of Geba.

Hanani appeared at this time to rebuke Asa for trusting in Syria rather than in Jehovah. A "seer" was one who by

Jehovah's endowment had more knowledge and understanding than ordinary persons. Samuel was called a "seer" when Saul was hunting his father's lost asses (I Samuel 9:9). Hanani implied that the Syrians should have been defeated in battle instead of being paid money as allies. Asa was reminded of the great victory over the Ethiopians (14:9) which Jehovah granted because Asa and Judah trusted God. The prophet declared that nothing happens among men which is hidden from Jehovah's eyes. Wherever He finds one "whose heart is perfect", He provides whatever may be needed. The man with "the perfect heart" relies on the Lord and thinks His thoughts after Him. Asa was charged with foolishness and was informed that he would be involved in war for the remainder of his reign. Like other prophets who had spoken unpopular messages, Hanani was mistreated by Asa. He was thrown into a "house of stocks", a place of torture. Asa was so upset by the words of the seer that he turned his wrath upon some of the citizens of his kingdom. In these matters Asa showed himself to be unworthy of the high office which he filled.

Historians were a part of Asa's cabinet and they kept careful records of his reign. So Asa's life was recorded in "the book of the Kings of Judah and Israel". The king's last years were most difficult. He was involved in war and all of the attendant political problems. He also suffered from diseased feet. He could have been afflicted with gout.<sup>1</sup> In these extreme circumstances he failed to call on God. He forgot his manner of life when he was a great reformer. Asa turned only to physicians for healing and forgot to turn to Jehovah in prayer. He began his reign very well. He concluded his life in misery and shame. After a reign of forty one years he died. He was granted all of the honors of a kingly burial and his remains were placed in a grave which he had prepared for himself. The "great burning" had to do with spices and incense burned at the time of the king's death.

<sup>1</sup>Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 663