

The World to Come

2 Chron. 1: 1; 2 Chron. 5: 9, 10; 2 Chron. 8: 11; 2 Chron. 9: 1-8, 15-24, 26.

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I have it in mind to view these chapters in a typical way as giving us a comprehensive picture of the world to come. I know no other Scriptures which so clearly portray this subject as these chapters do. Solomon, who is the centre of it all, aptly sets forth our Lord Jesus Christ as the centre of the glory in the day of Kingdom display.

In these passages we do not have any failure of Solomon recorded. Typically, everything is regarded as perfect in the record given to us here. It would set before us in picture that one Man who never failed, whether when in this world in testimony; in the work accomplished at the cross; in the glory where He is today; or in display in the world to come. The Son of God has not yet been seen publicly in His displayed glory, but Solomon is an outstanding type of the King in His glory in that day of display. His name means "peaceable." David was the warrior king, the man who subdued all the enemies. When Solomon sent to Hiram he said "there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent," 1 Kings 5: 4. Every hostile force had been subdued, and this man of peace in his glory and supremacy, and in divine wisdom, takes the Kingdom and orders it in every part according to the will of God.

"And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom and the LORD his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly" ch. 1: 1. Here is the first representation of the seed which God had promised to David, and which was typical of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we read that he was "magnified exceedingly" it surely reminds us of the One who will yet fill the universe with the glory of God.

With these thoughts of magnificence in mind we turn to 2 Chron. 9 where we have the interesting record of the visit of the Queen of Sheba. "And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions," verse 1.

In 1 Corinthians 2: 2, the apostle Paul reminds them that when he first came to Corinth he determined to know nothing among them "save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," verse 2. Note, however, that is not the foundation upon which we are built, for he further tells them in 1 Cor. 3: 11, that the foundation is *Jesus Christ*. This is substantial and positive, but "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" involves the negation of the wisdom of this world, and proves it to be foolishness. This was the testimony Paul rendered in view of freeing the saints from man's wisdom and from man's world, in order that they might be solidly attached to "Jesus Christ." Why? Because He is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God," 1 Cor. 1: 24. As the "wisdom of God" Christ has the solution of every problem in the universe, and this is seen typically in the account of the visit of the queen of Sheba. There were possibly difficulties in her kingdom in relation to administration, problems which she had failed to solve, and she would tell them one by one to this wonderful man. "And there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not." What problems there are in the world today among the nations, and especially in relation to Israel and all they have yet to endure; problems in the assembly too, and in the lives of us all. As Solomon held the solution of all the problems in his day, so Christ has the solution of all the problems of our day. Could there be any unsolved problems in the world to come? No, He will solve them all, and in this chapter we have a picture of this being done.

It is worth noting that the queen of Sheba was the first of many monarchs recorded in this chapter

who visited Solomon. There cannot be rest, or peace, or display of glory until every outstanding question has been settled both for God and for the blessing of those of His people who are involved. After her questions were answered, she turns her eyes from herself, and becomes occupied with the glory of the one who met her needs. So will it be in a future day.

As looking back over our readings in the Epistles we see how moral problems are raised and settled in Romans; then as set at liberty, our attention is drawn to Christ in His glory as seen in Colossians; and as we read of Solomon giving to the queen of his royal bounty, our minds are carried to Ephesians which sets forth the heavenly, spiritual blessings we have in Christ. Well might the queen add, "Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom." In the coming day the happiest people will be those who stand in relation to the One typified in Solomon. Moreover, the result will be praise and glory to God — "Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on His throne, to be king for the LORD thy God."

Another interesting point comes to light in these chapters. In 2 Chron. 8: 11, we read that Solomon built a house for the daughter of Pharaoh, and in 2 Chron. 9: 3, we read of Solomon's own house. In verse 4 we read of the "house of the LORD," and in verse 16 we read of "the house of the forest of Lebanon." The temple would be indicative of the universe, as the tabernacle had been in a former day. The tabernacle is characterized by approach, whilst the temple is characterized by display; the first speaking of going into God, and the second of coming out in display. In this connection the tabernacle would appear to be a greater thought than the temple. In the tabernacle we have the thought of God dwelling with men, but in the temple man dwells with God. In the tabernacle we do not get the thought of dwelling "in the house of the LORD for ever." God alone dwells in the tabernacle, but there were dwelling places for men in the temple. This is what our Lord referred to in saying, "In My Father's house are many mansions," John 14: 2. We read of the holy city, "I saw no temple therein," yet the city itself seems to partake of temple character, for "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it," (Rev. 21). Through that city the glory of God will shine *out*, hence its temple character, but in verse 3 of Revelation 21 we read "the tabernacle of God is with men." These earlier verses have the eternal state in view. As the last description which is given of the dwelling of God it must be a greater thought than the temple. God displaying Himself to man will be the distinctive thing in the world to come, but man entering in, in holy contemplation of God seems to be more the thought of the tabernacle in the eternal state.

Referring again to the temple built by Solomon, we read that he used seven kinds of gold in relation to it. In the tabernacle only two kinds of gold are mentioned, but in relation to what Solomon constructed we read of gold; pure gold; fine gold; perfect gold; best gold; gold of Parvaim and gold of Ophir. Why do we see such embellishment in temple days, and not in tabernacle days? I gather it suggests the distinctive rays of the glory of God which will shine out in the day of display. It is actually shining out today for those who have eyes to see it — "the glory of God in the fact of Jesus Christ," but it will come into public display in the world to come. Along with this the two brazen pillars would suggest that in the kingdom righteousness will reign. The rule of God will go out from the house between those brazen pillars, Jachin and Boaz. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever," Isaiah 32: 17.

In addition to the temple we read of "the house that he had built," verse 3. This was his own house, and we learn from the book of Kings that he took seven years to build the house of the LORD and thirteen years to build his own house. This has been referred to as a failure on Solomon's part, but I have rather regarded it as a typical matter. His own house I suggest is a type of the assembly, and typically almost double the work has gone into the assembly as against that which went into the

creation as typified in the temple. The assembly has been brought into being by the twofold work of redemption and of new creation; and just as Solomon's own house would be the most intimate circle in which he moved, so we today are in the most intimate circle in which Christ moves. This will be our place in the world to come, "nearer we could not be." It was *this* house that the queen described; *his* table, *his* ministers, etc. and it was this which called forth her praise.

In verse 16 we read of "the house of the forest of Lebanon," a house which describes the place of Israel in the world to come. Lebanon, where the cedars come from, would speak of the glory of men; the eminent men of Israel are spoken of as cedars of Lebanon. This would remind us of that second circle of blessing referred to in Psalm 22.

"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 the LORD hath come," 2 Chron. 8: 11.

This clearly suggests the place the Gentiles will have, as seen in the third circle of blessing referred to in Psalm 22. Each of these four houses was built by Solomon, a type of the One who will put all things in their right places in the day of display. Every family in heaven and earth is named of the Father, and He who is the Wisdom of God will put each family into its proper place; He will order the universe, and every family in it, for the pleasure and glory of God.

Moreover we read, "And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart," verse 23. Of the holy city we read, "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it," Revelation 21: 24. In Chronicles this is foreshadowed. The first thing stated in relation to "all the kings of the earth" is "They sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom." They needed correction, guidance and instruction, and they received all from the one who was the centre of the kingdom seen in its glory. Moreover, they bring their presents, and we read "And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt," verse 26. We know that in the world to come Christ will be "King of kings, and Lord of lords," 1 Tim. 6: 15; Rev. 19: 16. He is Lord in relation to the heavenly side of the kingdom, and King in relation to the earthly side. That is why in this day we do not speak of Jesus as our King. Scripture never refers to Him as King in relation to the assembly; He is *Lord* to the assembly; not *of* it but *to* it. Israel and all the kings of the earth must come under His kingship, for He is King of kings. Heaven and earth will be united under His beneficent rule, and He will fill all with the glory of God.

One last point remains to be referred to. We leave the outside and come to what is inside. "And they drew out the staves of the ark, 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," 2 Chron. 5: 9. Much debate and searching has been caused by this verse, as to whether the staves were removed from the ark entirely, or withdrawn to one end. Every pictorial reference to the ark I have seen depicts the staves along the back and the front. I am sure this is a mistake, as this verse will show. A reference to the words "drew out" will shew that they were extended along the sides of the ark and protruded at the front end pointing towards the house. They were not taken right out but withdrawn to one end. This was to indicate that the ark would no longer be carried by the Levites. It had been commanded in Exodus 25: 15, "They shall not be taken from it." Why were they left attached to the ark, but no longer in a position for carrying it? We know from Exodus that the ark was constructed before the staves. This indicates that Christ moved here personally before His name was taken up in testimony, as suggested by the Levites carrying the ark. This same testimony is being carried through today, and will continue to be

carried until He has His rightful place in the centre of the glory. In that day witness will be borne to the fact that He moved through this world in the interests of God and as accomplishing His will, and that since His ascension to heaven the testimony has been maintained in this world by His own, a privilege which is ours today. It will not be forgotten in the day to come that the ark has been a subject of testimony in the midst of a hostile world. What a privilege to have part in such a favoured service today!

"There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt," 2 Chron. 5: 10.

The golden pot with the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, had both disappeared. How and when we are not told. Both had to do with the history of Israel in the wilderness, where they needed to be sustained by divine food on the one hand, and by priestly intercession on the other. As long as we are in wilderness conditions we too need spiritual manna, and the intercession of the One "Who ever liveth to make intercession for us"; but in the world to come these will not be needed, hence their absence is recorded in this typical passage. The tables are left as a witness to Christ as having passed through this world subject to the claims of God under the old covenant, and as maintaining all that was due to God and to the neighbour. He passed through this world in subject, dependent, sinless Manhood, expressing all that man should be for the pleasure and glory of God. That pathway will ever be remembered in the coming days of the new covenant blessing for Israel. It looked as though no man would ever keep that law inviolate, but it will be ever remembered that *One* did so, the One of whom the ark was the type. Do we not see this clearly in Psalm 40: 8, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." This is strikingly demonstrated in John 14: 31, "but that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do, Arise, let us go hence." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," John 15: 13. Love to the Father on the one hand, and love to His own on the other; here was the covenant upheld in all its glory, and this is what will be had in remembrance when the One whom the ark typified becomes the centre of glory in that day. Will not Israel be moved to praise when they enter into the blessedness of new covenant conditions, and have brought to their remembrance that, in spite of all their failures under the old covenant, One came into this world and glorified God in regard to every detail of it?

These are the treasured things we are learning today, the very things which in that day will call forth the deepest notes of praise and worship to our Lord and to our God. With Christ at the centre, and with every ray of glory in full display, praise to His Name will ring out from every corner of the universe. It is our privilege to take up these notes of praise today.