

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## 2 CHRONICLES 1-5

When the Jews returned from their exile in Babylon, Ezra came with them. He was a priest with a pen. He writes an encouraging chronicle of Jewish history.

The books, Samuel and Kings, are straightforward history, whereas Chronicles is a commentary on that history. It's written from a certain slant. Rather than labor over the nation's numerous mistakes, Ezra focuses mainly on what they did right.

One commentator explains it as follows - Kings is the history of Israel from *man's viewpoint*. Chronicles is the history of Israel from *God's viewpoint*.

If so, that explanation reveals a glorious truth... *God is always looking on the bright side*. God forgives and forgets our failures, and affirms our godly efforts.

It's revealing that a quarter of 2 Chronicles deals with the reign of Solomon.

The entire book covers almost 400 years of history from 971 – 586 BC, but 25% of the book is preoccupied with 10% of the time period. The Kingdom of Solomon was the pinnacle of Judah's prominence. It was their golden age.

Ezra's purpose is to *inspire* the exiles with a reminder of the glory they once enjoyed, in hopes that they'll *aspire* to that same glory again.

Look at how he opens, 1:1: “Now Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God was with him and exalted him exceedingly.”

Notice, Solomon’s success wasn’t the result of military, or economic, or natural advantages. The key to success was simpler – “*God was with him and exalted him exceedingly.*” And Ezra believes if God did it once, He will do it again.

The key to real success is God’s presence and His promotion!

2 Chronicles teaches Judah and us, what Abraham Lincoln once said, “Without God’s assistance I cannot succeed; with His assistance I cannot fail.”

“And Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to every leader in all Israel, the heads of the fathers' houses.

Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon...” This was Solomon’s coronation - his installation as king of Israel.

They go to Gibeon, “for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness.

But David had brought up the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim to the place David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.” The Ark of the Covenant – the symbol of God’s Presence - is in Jerusalem.

But Solomon heads to the Tabernacle that was still in Gibeon, for he wants to make sacrifice on the brazen altar that sits in the outer court. “Now the bronze altar that Bezalel

the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD; Solomon and the assembly sought Him there.

And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which was at the tabernacle of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.”

The Jewish historian, Josephus, says Solomon was 14 years old when he became king. He was an 8<sup>th</sup> grader - a Middle Schooler – a rising freshman.

And he had some really big shoes to fill. His dad was David. How would he be able to meet the expectations, and live up to the high standards of his father?

But Solomon is wise from the outset. He turns to God - to the Tabernacle, and offers a thousand burnt offerings. *“Which remind me of the wife who treated her husband like a god... She offered him burnt offerings every night for dinner!”*

Verse 7 tells us how God responded to the sacrifice, *“On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, “Ask! What shall I give you?”*

God gives to Solomon a blank check! Solomon can have anything he wants!

What if God said to you, *“Make a wish, I’ll grant you one wish! I’ll give you a blank check, and sign it! Ask for whatever you want, I’ll grant your request!”*

Here’s another way to look at it - what one thing would solve all your problems?

*If I won the lotto!* - I hope you don’t believe that! I could

present example after example of how winning the lotto creates as many problems as it solves.

*If I had my own business... or got married... or I was better looking...* Trust me, I'm a pretty good looking guy, but it sure hasn't eliminated all my problems...

God gives Solomon His Visa card - with an unlimited limit. He tells Solomon he can make one purchase... *If given the same offer what would you request?*

Verse 8 "And Solomon said to God: "You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place. Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude." Here's his request, "Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?" Solomon chooses wisely - he asks for wisdom.

Hey, here's the solution to all your problems... **wisdom!**

Whether you are king of a nation, or king of your castle - you need wisdom to apply God's Word – to walk in His ways and will. Rather than more stuff, we need wisdom to enjoy what we have, make right choices, and succeed in relationships.

In verse 11 God responds to Solomon's choice in a wonderful way, "And God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life - but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king -

wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who were before you, nor shall any after you have the like."

God not only gives Solomon wisdom - He gives him everything else he could have asked for but didn't... *riches, honor, victory over his enemies, long life.*

Here's a truth we need to understand... **Until our priorities in life are set the blessings of life can get in the way.** When a heart is fixated on material stuff – the stuff becomes a distraction to seeking the Lord and growing in Him.

The blessings become more important than the Blessor - and crowd out God. The Lord wants to bless us, but only after we've devoted ourselves fully to Him.

As Jesus told us in Matthew 6:33... **"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."** Pursue God's ways and wisdom – and He'll see to it you have what you need when you need it.

Verse 13 **"So Solomon came to Jerusalem from the high place that was at Gibeon, from before the tabernacle of meeting, and reigned over Israel."** The young king's experience at Gibeon became a permanent landmark in his life.

**"And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem."** The chariot cities of Solomon became famous. *Hazor* in the north, *Megiddo* at the entranceway to the coastal plain, and *Gezer*

which stood on the border between Judah and the Philistines - were all three famous chariot cities.

“Also the king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland.

And Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh (or what is today, southern Turkey); the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the current price.

They also acquired and imported from Egypt a chariot for 600 shekels of silver, and a horse for 150; thus, through their agents, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.” Solomon became a horse trader. He was a middleman. He went southward to Egypt where he bought cheap – then marked up the mounts and sold them to the Syrians and Hittites – all at a nice profit.

Chapter 2, “Then Solomon determined to build a temple for the name of the LORD, and a royal house for himself. Solomon selected 70,000 men to bear burdens, 80,000 to quarry stone in the mountains, and 3,600 to oversee them.”

Solomon’s father, David, had made enormous preparations for the building of the Temple, but there were 2 things Solomon felt he lacked – **timber** and **talent**.

He needs *cedar* and *craftsmen* who can do the intricate and artistic design in the Temple. Solomon knows where to go for both. He recalls his dad’s old friend.

“Then Solomon sent to Hiram king of Tyre, saying: As you have dealt with David my father, and sent him cedars to build

himself a house to dwell in, so deal with me. Behold, I am building a temple for the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate it to Him, to burn before Him sweet incense, for the continual showbread, for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the Sabbaths, on the New Moons, and on the set feasts of the LORD our God. This is an ordinance forever to Israel.

And the temple which I build will be great, for our God is greater than all gods.

But who is able to build Him a temple, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him?" Numerous times Solomon makes this statement.

He was never under the illusion that God would enter his Temple to dwell there permanently - cut off from the rest of the universe. He never saw the Temple as a house for God – just a footstool. The infinite God fills the heavens, but He would prop up His feet in the Temple. Solomon understood God's transcendence.

It's sad, but too many Christians have the wrong notion about the church. They conclude that the church is God's house. He lives in the church, thus He's not at work, or school, or at the ballpark, or in the neighborhood – He's at the church.

Not so. Yes, God props up His feet with us on Sundays, but He's out and about as well. He fills *the heavens and the hood*. **God is at all places at all times.**

Solomon continues, "Who am I then, that I should build Him a temple, except to burn sacrifice before Him? Therefore



send me at once a man skillful to work in gold and silver, in bronze and iron, in purple and crimson and blue, who has skill to engrave with the skillful men who are with me in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father provided. Also send me cedar and cypress and algum logs from Lebanon, for I know that your servants have skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and indeed my servants will be with your servants, to prepare timber for me in abundance, for the temple which I am about to build shall be great and wonderful.” Solomon needs *talent* and *timber*, so he goes to Hiram...

And here’s what’s in it for Hiram, “And indeed I will give to your servants, the woodsmen who cut timber, 20,000 kors of ground wheat, 20,000 kors of barley, 20,000 baths of wine, and 20,000 baths of oil.” A kor was a dry measurement - the equivalent of 11 bushels. A bath was a liquid volume of about 9 gallons.

Hiram received 220,000 bushels of wheat and barley – and 180,000 gallons of wine and oil. Tyre’s partnership with Solomon proved quite lucrative for Hiram.

Verse 11 “Then Hiram king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon: Because the LORD loves His people, He has made you king over them.

Hiram also said: Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who made heaven and earth...” His faith in Jehovah was probably the reason he got along so well with David and Solomon. Whether Hiram worshipped God alone we’re not sure, but he’s what you might call “a *God-fearing man*.” He respected the God of Israel.



And Hiram continues in verse 12, “For He has given King David a wise son, endowed with prudence and understanding, who will build a temple for the LORD and a royal house for himself! He also respected David and his family.

“And now I have sent a skillful man, endowed with understanding, Hiram my master craftsman (the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre) (Hiram was half-Israeli), skilled to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and wood, purple and blue, fine linen and crimson, and to make any engraving and to accomplish any plan which may be given to him, with your skillful men and with the skillful men of my lord David your father.”

My son, Nick, has recently taken up woodworking as a hobby. He’s been aided by his granddaddy who keeps feeding him new tools. His mom and I bought him a table saw for his birthday. But Nick is discovering that it takes more than tools to be a good craftsman – it takes talent, and touch, and skill, and artistry.

Evidently this half-Phoenician, half-Israeli named *Hiram* had all the above.

“Now therefore, the wheat, the barley, the oil, and the wine which my lord has spoken of, let him send to his servants. And we will cut wood from Lebanon, as much as you need; we will bring it to you in rafts by sea to Joppa, and you will carry it up to Jerusalem.” Hiram says, pay us first, and we’ll deliver the goods.

Floating the timber down the coast was far easier than hauling it overland.

Joppa was the Mediterranean port closest to Jerusalem. Joppa is about 35 miles northwest of Jerusalem. It's a little south of the modern city of Tel Aviv.

Verse 17 “Then Solomon numbered all the aliens who were in the land of Israel, after the census in which David his father had numbered them; and there were found to be 153,600. And he made 70,000 of them bearers of burdens, 80,000 stonecutters in the mountain, and 3,600 overseers to make the people work.”

Rather than subject the Israelis to the hard, manual, back-breaking labor required to quarry and transport huge granite stones - Solomon drafted the Gentiles, the non-citizens living in the land of Israel to do this kind of work.

Jesus called the Temple “a house of prayer for all nations”. It's strange that later Jews barred Gentiles from the Temple - the Gentiles helped to build it.

Chapter 3, “Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.”

There's a Jewish legend that explains how the site for the Temple was chosen.

Two brothers had fallen on hard times, but rather than worry about themselves they were concerned for each other. Without the other knowing it, they each took a food basket,

and in the middle of the night went to place it on the other's doorstep.

As the story goes, they bumped into each other in the moonlight. When they saw each other's generosity – they hugged. The Temple was build where the brothers embraced. And for years to come the Temple would unify Israel.

Rather than worship in multiple locations, God centralized worship for all Israel at the Temple. This insured *purity* and *unity*. Solomon's Temple was the one place where man could be sure to embrace God - and brother could embrace brother.

Of course, the biblical reason for where the Temple was built is a bit different...

When God brought judgment on David because of his prideful census, the king was told to build an altar to God on the threshing floor of Ornan. A threshing flood was a raised, wind-blown platform where the wheat was separated from the chaff.

It was at the platform of Ornan that the Angel of judgment was told by God to return His sword to his scabbard. David purchased the property from Ornan – 35 acres on Mount Moriah – and it was here that Solomon built the Temple.

And this is why the piece of real estate known as the Temple of Mount remains in contention today. The modern Jews want to rebuild their Temple, but God does not allow them to construct it just anywhere. God decreed a site for the Temple.

Ornan's threshing floor is the only biblical option for a Jewish Temple.

Remember also Abraham offered up to God his only son, Isaac, on Mount Moriah. Abraham's act of devotion took place on or near this exact spot.

Verse 2, "And (Solomon) began to build on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of his reign." The 4<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Solomon was probably 967 BC.

1 Kings 6:38 tells us it took 7 years to complete the construction of the Temple.

There's a Jewish legend that claims not a single worker died while employed in the work of the Temple. In fact, no one became ill. Imagine 150,000 workers over a 7½ year period and not a single sick day. The legend also claims tools stayed sharp and unimpaired for 7 ½ years - so there was no interruption of the work.

Verse 3, "This is the foundation which Solomon laid for building the house of God: The length was 60 cubits (by cubits according to the former measure) and the width 20 cubits." A cubit was originally the distance from the tip of the king's finger to his elbow. The standardized cubit of Solomon's day was 18 inches.

Thus, the Temple proper – the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies - was 90 feet long by 30 feet wide – twice the size of the Tabernacle it replaced.

"And the vestibule that was in front of the sanctuary was 20 cubits long across the width of the house, and the height was 120." 1 Kings 6:3 says it was 10 cubits deep. So the Temple foyer was 30 x 15'. 1 Kings also tells us the Holy Place and

Holy of Holies behind the foyer was 30 cubits high – or 45'. That would have classified as a cathedral ceiling... a building 90 x 30' with a 45' ceiling.

Here we're told the foyer's height – a 30 x 15' room – was 120 cubits or 180'. Your Bible probably footnotes verse 3, and says it could read "20 cubits" or 30'.

The Hebrew words for "*one-hundred*" and "*cubits*" are easily confused.

This is a rare occasion where the Hebrew manuscripts differ, and this is why some Temple renderings appear with a tall façade in front of the Holy Place.

Many of the rabbis reconciled the 120 cubits by saying Chronicles gave a *spiritual* meaning while the *literal* height of the Temple porch was 30 feet.

Whatever its height, "He overlaid the inside with pure gold. The larger room..."

Remember the Temple contained two rooms – the Holy Place where the priest worked, and the Holy of Holies where the presence of God resided.

In the larger room or Holy Place, "He paneled with cypress which he overlaid with fine gold, and he carved palm trees and chainwork on it." The palm trees spoke of fruitfulness and prosperity. "And he decorated the house with precious stones for beauty, and the gold was gold from Parvaim." Deep into the Orient.

"He also overlaid the house - the beams and doorposts, its walls and doors - with gold; and he carved cherubim on the

walls.” Remember, the Tabernacle and Temple were a model of God’s throne in heaven. Since *Cherubim* are the angels that surround His heavenly throne it was fitting they were seen in the Temple.

Notice again, the Temple’s interior was overlaid with pure gold.

“And he made the Most Holy Place...” It was also called “*the Holy of Holies*.” This is where the Shekinnah Glory – the glory of God rested in the Temple.

Its length was according to the width of the house, 20 cubits, and its width 20 cubits.” The inner sanctum was 30’ square. “He overlaid it with 600 talents of fine gold...” or 60,000 pounds of gold. At today price, the gold was worth \$624 million.

Verse 9 “The weight of the nails was 50 shekels of gold; and he overlaid the upper area with gold.” Imagine they used gold nails inside the Holy of Holies. And these were more like bolts – they weighed nearly two pounds a piece.

You and I have never seen anything as ornate as Solomon’s Temple.

“In the Most Holy Place he made two cherubim, fashioned by carving, and overlaid them with gold. The wings of the cherubim were 20 cubits in overall length: one wing of the one cherub was 5 cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing was 5 cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub; one wing of the other cherub was five cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing also was five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub. The wings of these

cherubim spanned 20 cubits overall. They stood on their feet, and they faced inward.” The wingspan of the cherubim filled the Holy of Holies. Their bodies must’ve been faced forward, while their heads were turned toward the Ark.

Revelation 4 tells us 4 living creatures surround God’s throne in heaven. It’s interesting there were also 4 cherubim in the Temple. These two cherubim - and the two that sat on top of the Ark of the Covenant... The cherubim in the Temple were reminders to Israel...we never worship angels, but we worship *with* angels.

The next few verses bring up more questions than they answer...

Verse 14 tells us “And he made the veil of blue, purple, crimson, and fine linen, and wove cherubim into it.” In 1 Kings, rather than a veil, we’re told a four-paneled olive wood door separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

Which was it – a *cloth veil* or a *wooden door*? Perhaps it was both.

“Also he made in front of the temple two pillars 35 cubits (52½’) high...” 1 Kings tells us they were cast in bronze - and stood at the entrance to the Holy Place.

“And the capital that was on the top of each of them was 5 cubits. He made wreaths of chainwork, as in the inner sanctuary, and put them on top of the pillars; and he made 100 pomegranates, and put them on the wreaths of chainwork.”



The capital was an ornamental feature at the top of the pillar – the equivalent of crown molding. Add its height and the pillars rose 60' – 15' above the roofline.

*But here's another problem...* 1 Kings 7 tells us these pillars were 18 cubits high – not 35 cubits - about half the height mentioned here in 2 Chronicles.

It could be they were cast as one pillar – then cut in half and rounded off.

There's another possibility... It could be the 18 cubits in 1 Kings was just the pillar, whereas the 35 cubits included the ornamentation at the top of the pillar.

Or it could be a very rare transcription error in the text we possess.

The Hebrew letters that denote number “18” (yod cheth) look a lot like number “35” (lamed heh)... A smudge or scribal error could account for the discrepancy.

*Which brings up a larger question...* **“Does this mean our Bibles contain errors?”** The short answer is “No”. The original manuscripts were inerrant.

The problem though is we no longer have the originals – or “*the autographs*” as they're called. We have manuscript copies... very old copies, and lots of copies.

And amazingly, of all the manuscripts we possess most are nearly identical.

The copies are in 99% agreement with each other. The Hebrews – to whom the Bible is entrusted - did an extremely faithful job in the transcription of the text.

The 1947 discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls were amazing validation of the Old Testament's reliability. The Scrolls contained copies of the Old Testament 1000 years older than anything we had previously possessed. They proved that the Bible you hold in your hand is essentially the Old Testament Jesus read.

And in the 5% of the text that does differ – *like here* - none of the discrepancies impact any significant doctrines. It's usually just numbers or spelling... *And does this erode my confidence in the Bible?* No way! It makes my faith more realistic.

The preservation of the copies of the Bible, on which we depend, has been a partnership between God and man. Because man is a part small errors are possible, but since God is involved our mistakes can't undermine His plan.

Verse 17, "Then he set up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand and the other on the left; he called the name of the one on the right hand Jachin, and the name of the one on the left Boaz." "Jachin" means "He shall establish." "Boaz" means "in Him is strength." The pillars that stood outside the Temple were vivid reminders to the worshipper of God's faithfulness and power.

And these are reminders to us of the Temple Jesus is building today – the Church. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." He points to His faithfulness and strength.

Today God dwells in the Church. We are his Temple. And Jesus is building a strong and glorious church that'll *bring His*

*people together and bring Him glory.*

Chapter 4, “Moreover he made a bronze altar: 20 cubits was its length, 20 cubits its width, and 10 cubits its height.” The bronze altar was the BBQ pit. It’s where the sacrifices were offered. The altar was 30’ square x 15’ high.

“Then he made the Sea of cast bronze...”

This was the basin where the priests washed before they entered the Temple.

In the Tabernacle it was “a laver.” In the Temple it’s “the Sea”. The priesthood had grown in number - a larger bowl was needed to accommodate the crowd.

It’s interesting in heaven it’s called “the sea of glass.” But instead of the saints washing in the sea – they’re standing on it. In heaven there is no more sin – thus no more need for cleansing. *Where we washed on earth we’ll stand in heaven.*

Verse 10 sizes up the sea... “Ten cubits from one brim to the other; it was completely round. Its height was 5 cubits, and a line of 30 cubits measured its circumference. And under it was the likeness of oxen encircling it all around...”

The bronze Sea sat on the backs of 12 bronze oxen. “Ten to a cubit, all the way around the Sea. The oxen were cast in two rows, when it was cast.

It stood on 12 oxen: 3 looking toward the north, 3 looking toward the west, 3 looking toward the south, and 3 looking toward the east; the Sea was set upon them, and all their back parts pointed inward.” The oxen were cheek to cheek.

It was a handbreadth thick (or the width of your hand); and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It contained 3000 baths.” 1 Kings 7:26 tells us the Sea held 2000 baths. Here we’re told it contained 3000 baths.

It could be its capacity was 3000 baths, but was usually filled with less, 2000.

Remember too, Chronicles was written after the Babylonian captivity. Possibly they were using a Babylonian measurement. The *Babylonian bath* was smaller.

A Hebrew bath was a little shy of 9 gallons. A Babylon bath was 6 gallons. Either way the bath held a lot of water – around 18,000 gallons. The bronze sea was twice the size of the CCSM baptismal pool and 7½ feet deep.

“He also made 10 lavers, and put 5 on the right side and 5 on the left, to wash in them; such things as they offered for the burnt offering they would wash in them, but the Sea was for the priests to wash in.” The 10 side lavers were used to wash meat sections of the sacrifices before they were sacrificed on the bronze altar.

“And he made 10 lampstands of gold according to their design, and set them in the temple (in the Holy Place), 5 on the right side and 5 on the left. He also made 10 tables (Tables of Showbread), and placed them in the temple, 5 on the right side and 5 on the left.” The Tabernacle had only one lampstand and one table.

“And (Solomon) made 100 bowls of gold.

Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court and doors for the court; and he overlaid these doors

with bronze.” Solomon formed an outer court, and in it, “He set the Sea on the right side, toward the southeast.

“Then Hiram (Solomon’s Phoenician friend) made the pots and the shovels and the bowls.” Solomon commissioned the work, but Hiram supplied the craftsmanship. Hiram was an expert in molding and metal fabrication.

“So Hiram finished doing the work that he was to do for King Solomon for the house of God: the 2 pillars and the bowl-shaped capitals that were on top of the 2 pillars; the 2 networks covering the 2 bowl-shaped capitals which were on top of the pillars; 400 pomegranates for the 2 networks (2 rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the 2 bowl-shaped capitals that were on the pillars); he also made carts and the lavers on the carts; one Sea and 12 oxen under it; also the pots, the shovels, the forks - and all their articles Hiram his master craftsman made of burnished bronze for King Solomon for the house of the LORD.”

In the plain of Jordan the king had them cast in clay molds, between Succoth and Zeredah. And Solomon had all these articles made in such great abundance that the weight of the bronze was not determined.” Solomon spared no expense.

“Thus Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of God: the altar of gold and the tables on which was the showbread; the lampstands with their lamps of pure gold, to burn in the prescribed manner in front of the inner sanctuary, with the flowers...” The Temple was adorned with flowers, pomegranates, and palm trees. *The rabbis believed the Temple was a restoration of the Garden of Eden.*

Solomon also ordered the making of “the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold, of purest gold; the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the censers of pure gold.

As for the entry of the sanctuary, its inner doors to the Most Holy Place, and the doors of the main hall of the temple, were gold.” In 3:14 a veil covered the doorway into the Holy of Holies. Here and in 1 Kings we’re told it was a door.

It’s my assumption that there must’ve been both... and both symbolize Jesus. Jesus is the door to God. And His body is the veil that was torn so we can enter.

Chapter 5, “So all the work that Solomon had done for the house of the LORD was finished; and Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated: the silver and the gold and all the furnishings.

And he put them in the treasuries of the house of God.

“Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD up from the City of David, which is Zion...” The city of David sits southward on Mount Moriah below what we call the Temple Mount. They had to bring the Ark out of David’s tent, and into the Temple.

“Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with the king at the feast, which was in the 7<sup>th</sup> month.” Or the month of Tishri – the holy month – during Tishri the Jews celebrate their 3 fall feasts: Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles.



“So all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. Then they brought up the ark, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that were in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up.

Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him before the ark, were sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim. For the cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles.

And the poles extended so that the ends of the poles of the ark could be seen from the holy place, in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day.” Ezra must’ve been speaking of the time of his sources. The Ark was absent from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple built by the post-exile Jews.

Ezra does comment on the contents of the Ark at the time of Solomon...

“Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they had come out of Egypt.”

Hebrews 9:4 says at one time the Ark held *a jar of manna*, *Aaron’s rod* that supernaturally budded, and *the two stone tablets* on which were written the Ten Commandments. By the time of Solomon only the tablets remained.



What happened to the manna and the rod? No one knows.

“And it came to pass when the priests came out of the Most Holy Place (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without keeping to their divisions), and the Levites who were the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, (before the altar – facing the Temple) clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them 120 priests sounding with trumpets...” This is the Temple’s Grand Opening! The priests carry in the Ark - exit the Holy of Holies - now the worship team strikes up their praise!

“Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever...”

Psalm 22:3 says of God, “You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.” God indwells or inhabits the praises of His people. When we praise God, He shows up.

And that’s what happens, “That the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.”

The glory of God – the Shekinnah – filled the Temple with thick, dense smoke – like a cloud that rolled in off the ocean.

The presence of God was so intense no one could carry on his priestly duties. All the work came to a screeching halt.

My friend and Bible commentator, David Guzik, identifies this cloud of glory...

As the cloud that led Israel through the wilderness...

...the cloud from which God spoke to Israel from Mount Sinai...

...the cloud from which God met Moses... and others...

...the cloud that filled the Tabernacle...

...the cloud from which God appeared to the High Priest at Yom Kippur...

...the cloud that Ezekiel called “the brightness of God’s glory”...

...the cloud that overshadowed the womb of the Virgin Mary...

...the cloud that covered the mountaintop at Jesus’ transfiguration...

...the cloud that received Jesus into heaven at His ascension...

...the cloud that will display the glory of Jesus at His Second Coming...

This was the cloud that appeared the day God moved into Solomon’s Temple! *The glory of God dwells within His Temple.* May He fill us with His glory tonight!