

2 Chronicles Chapter 8

Verses 1-6: Solomon built all that he “desired to build” throughout his realm. He no doubt also controlled many trade routes, which contributed to his wealth. By making Solomon’s success produce more success, God blessed him for building the temple.

2 Chronicles 8:1 "And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of the LORD, and his own house,"

The verb is identical with (1 Kings 9:10), slightly abbreviated.

"Twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of the Lord, and his own house": The description is intended to be, what it is, chronologically exact. Four years of Solomon had passed when he began the Lord's house. Seven were spent in building it, thirteen in finishing and furnishing it, and in building, finishing, and furnishing the king's house, in all twenty-four years. (Ca. 946 B.C.), 24 years after Solomon’s reign began.

This is probably, at the 24th year of his reign as king. He did not begin the house of the LORD, until 4 years after he began to reign. He was 7 years building the house of the LORD. It was actually 20 years after he began the work on the temple and his own house, that everything was completed.

2 Chronicles 8:2 "That the cities which Hiram had restored to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there."

(Compare 1 Kings 9:10-14).

Though these cities were within the boundaries of the Promised Land, they had never been conquered, so Solomon gave Hiram the right to settle them. Hiram, however, returned the Galilean cities which Solomon had given him because they were unacceptably poor. Solomon apparently then improved them and settled Israelites there.

(See the note on 1 Kings 9:13).

Hiram had acquired 20 cities from Solomon in payment for the cedars he had provided for the buildings in Jerusalem. Hiram had never been pleased with these cities, and now it appears that he had given them back to Solomon. They were pretty worthless in the condition they were in. Solomon now, takes them and restores them for the people. We are not told whether Solomon gave Hiram something else in place of the cities or not.

Verses 3-6: Here are additional military campaigns and building projects not mentioned (in 1 Kings chapter 9). He was building storage places for his commercial enterprises and fortifying his borders to secure his kingdom from invasion.

2 Chronicles 8:3 "And Solomon went to Hamath-zobah, and prevailed against it."

In a hostile manner, which is the only instance of any warlike expedition of Solomon's. This was Coelesyria, which though subdued in the times of David, perhaps rebelled, and now Solomon went forth to reduce it.

"And prevailed against it": Took it.

"Hamath-zobah": A city located in Syria, north of Damascus and in close proximity to but south of Hamath.

This is either a city, or an area at the border of Lebanon.

2 Chronicles 8:4 "And he built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store cities, which he built in Hamath."

That is, Palmyra, in the wilderness, on the traders' route between the coast and the Euphrates. (See 1 Kings 9:18), where Tamar of the Hebrew text is explained by the margin to mean Tadmor. And the epithet, "in the wilderness," seems certainly to identify the two names. That Solomon was the founder of Palmyra is the tradition of the country to this day. "Tadmor": A city 150 miles northeast of Damascus.

"And all the storehouses which he built in Hamath": a country in Syria, which he made himself master of, and where he laid up store of provision and ammunition to keep it, should any attempt be made to rescue it out of his hands. According to an Arabic writer, Solomon in the twenty fourth year of his reign having demolished Antioch, built seven cities, of which Tadmor was one.

"Hamath": A city north of Damascus.

Now we see why he had done this. He is safeguarding his borders. This Tadmor was built about 150 miles northeast of Damascus. The store cities were scattered throughout the territory.

2 Chronicles 8:5 "Also he built Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, fenced cities, with walls, gates, and bars;"

"Beth-horon": Two cities northwest of Jerusalem. Upper Beth-horon is at 2022 feet, 11 miles northwest of Jerusalem. Lower Beth-horon is at 1210 feet, 13 miles northwest of Jerusalem. They were both on a strategic road that connected Jerusalem with Joppa on the coast.

These were both in the land of Ephraim. These two cities were allotted to the Kohathite Levites. They were well fortified. It is almost as if he was building outskirt cities, to keep the enemy from ever making it into Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 8:6 "And Baalath, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities, and the cities of the horsemen, and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and throughout all the land of his dominion."

(See 1 Kings 9:18). From here, to the end of (2 Chron. 8:11), it is the same with (1 Kings 9:19 on; see 1 Kings 9:19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24).

(1 Kings 9:18). Like the two Beth-horons, it lay west of Jerusalem, and was a bulwark against the Philistines (compare Joshua 19:44, a Danite town). The rest of this verse is identical with (1 Kings 9:19). In the above section, no mention is made of the fortification of Jerusalem, and the building of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer, which last city had been taken by Pharaoh, and given by him to his daughter, Solomon's wife (see 1 Kings 9:15-16). On the other hand, as we have seen, the chronicler supplies several important details which are wanting in the parallel account.

"Store cities... chariot cities": Cities of the horsemen (see 2 Chron. 16:4; 32:28; 1 Kings 4:26; 9:19). In the parallel some of the names of the places built, or rebuilt, or repaired by Solomon in this connection are given as "Millo and the wall of Jerusalem" (Millo's foundations occupied the hollow at the south-west corner of the hill of the temple), "and Hazor and Megiddo and Gezer" (1 Kings 9:15).

"All that Solomon desired to build": I.e. for purposes of personal enjoyment or ornament.

We discussed in an earlier lesson, that the way to have peace is by having a very strong army that is well equipped, then let the enemies know of this strength. This is what Solomon was doing. He was showing strength in the outer areas. Baalath was in the land of Dan. These store cities were for several purposes. They were out posts to keep the enemies away. They were also, a place to collect the tribute and "*corvée*" (forced labor), for Solomon. Solomon was the wealthiest man that ever lived, so he could equip his men with the finest chariots and other things they needed. He also had the wealth to build all of the well-fortified cities.

Verses 7-10 (see the notes on 1 Kings 5:13; 14; 15; 16).

2 Chronicles 8:7 "[As for] all the people [that were] left of the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which [were] not of Israel,"

Verses 7-10. These verses, corresponding very nearly exactly with the parallel (1 Kings 9:20-23), betray how it was a thing never to be forgotten. If only as a fact, that the extermination of the old possessors of the land had not been entire. So that allusion to it is not omitted even by a post-Captivity compiler. The parallel charitably "whom the children of Israel were not able to destroy utterly," where our text shows with exacter fidelity, whom the children of Israel consumed not.

"Hittites ... Jebusites" (see notes on 1 Chron. 1:13-15).

2 Chronicles 8:8 "[But] of their children, who were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel consumed not, them did Solomon make to pay tribute until this day."

Revised Version: Of their Children.

"Them did Solomon make to pay tribute": Revised Version: Of them did Solomon raise a levy of bondservants. The word "tribute" (Authorized Version), suggests payment in money, but, as may be seen from (2 Chron. 2:17-18), the subject peoples acknowledged their subjection otherwise. Viz., by submitting to do task-work for Solomon.

Solomon allowed them to live, but under the condition they would pay tribute to him. They were bondservants to Solomon. However, many of them were allowed to live in their homes they had before there was a tax levied upon everything they did.

2 Chronicles 8:9 "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 captains of his chariots and horsemen."

"And chief of his captains": Read (with 1 Kings 9:22), and his princes and his captains. The statements of this verse must be read in connection with (1 Kings 5:13; 12:4). Whence it appears that though Solomon did not actually reduce any Israelite to permanent slavery, yet he imposed upon his own people a tax which was felt to be very burdensome.

The children of Israel were thought of as brethren of Solomon. They held the important positions such as leaders. The army was made up of Israelites. They had no hired soldiers. He gave a rank of captain to those he could.

2 Chronicles 8:10 "And these [were] the chief of king Solomon's officers, [even] two hundred and fifty, that bare rule over the people."

After this preface (compare 1 Kings 9:23), we expect both here and (in 1 Kings), a list of these persons (compare (1 Chron. 11:10; 12:1). Possibly the text of (1 Kings), suffered at an early date, and the list was missing when the Chronicler wrote.

"Two hundred and fifty": According to (1 Kings 9:23), five hundred and fifty. On the other hand, the under-overseers are reckoned at three thousand six hundred in (2 Chron. 2:18), as against three thousand three hundred (in 1 Kings 5:16). The total number therefore of overseers of all kinds is given (both in 1 Kings and 2 Chron. as 3850).

"Two hundred and fifty" (see note on 2 Chron. 2:2).

These 250 men were over the soldiers of Israel. They were not the rulers over the servants. The different tribes were represented in these 250. These were the men that would lead them to war, if there was a war. At that time, they were occupied with keeping the peace.

Verses 11-13: Solomon respected the holiness of the Ark by securing another dwelling for the "daughter of Pharaoh", since he respected God's law, he ensured that sacrifices were being offered "according to the commandment of Moses" (Lev. Chapter 23).

2 Chronicles 8:11 "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 the LORD hath come."

“Daughter of Pharaoh” (compare (1 Kings 9:24).

(1 Kings 3:1), mentions the marriage and the fact that Solomon brought her to Jerusalem until he could build a house for her. Until that palace was built, Solomon lived in David’s palace, but did not allow her to do so, because she was a heathen and because the Ark of God had once been in David’s house. He surely knew his marriage to this pagan did not please God (compare Deut. 7:3-4). Eventually his pagan wives caused tragic consequences (1 Kings 11:1-11).

(See the notes on 1 Sam. 4:3 and 1 Kings 7:2-8).

Solomon had married an Egyptian woman. She was not a Hebrew. When Solomon experienced the presence of God in the temple in Jerusalem, he realized that the city of Jerusalem was the city of God. Solomon built this Egyptian wife a house, which was located out of Jerusalem. He realized she was not a believer in the One True God.

Verses 8-12: This section expands on (1 Kings 9:25), and indicates that Solomon was, in spite of his disobedience in marriage, still faithful to the religious practices required in the temple.

2 Chronicles 8:12 "Then Solomon offered burnt offerings unto the LORD on the altar of the LORD, which he had built before the porch,"

Meaning not barely at the time he rebuilt the above cities, for it was his constant practice.

"On the altar of the Lord, which he had built before the porch": The brazen altar, which was at the entrance into the temple, within the court, of which (see 2 Chron. 4:1).

We know that there were daily sacrifices to the LORD. Solomon saw that the animals for the sacrifices were available and ready. This altar seemed to be at the entrance of the porch. This altar was a brazen altar.

2 Chronicles 8:13 "Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn 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."

“Three ... feasts”: These were prescribed in the Mosaic legislation:

- (1) Unleavened Bread, or Passover;
- (2) Weeks, or Pentecost; and

(3) Booths or Tabernacles (compare Exodus 23:14-17; Deut. 16:1-17).

There were three times a year that all the males had to appear at the temple. The Feast of Unleavened Bread overlapped Passover. The Feast of Weeks is the same as Pentecost. The Feast of Tabernacles was right after the Feast of Trumpets. The offerings had been re-established as they had been given to Moses on the way to the Promised Land. Solomon had been instructed by David on the need to observe these times.

2 Chronicles 8:14 "And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service, and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required: the porters also by their courses at every gate: for so had David the man of God commanded."

The twenty-four courses which served weekly in their turns (1 Chron. 24:1).

"And the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as duty of every day required": Who also had their courses by lot, to sing the praises of God, when the priests sacrificed, or blew the trumpets (1 Chron. 25:1).

"The porters also by their courses at every gate": From hence Dr. Lightfoot concludes that these were divided into twenty-four classes, as the priests and Levite singers were.

"For so had David the man of God commanded": (1 Chron. 26:1), who in all these affairs acted as a prophet, under the inspiration and direction of the Holy Spirit of God.

Solomon here confirms the institutions of his father "David" (compare 1 Chron. 23:2 – 26:28).

It appears that David had already set up the various duties of the various families before his death. He was led by the writings of Moses in his decisions he had made. Solomon did not change any of the arrangements David had set up, because he knew David was a man of God. We studied all of this in detail in an earlier lesson.

2 Chronicles 8:15 "And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures."

The priests and Levites departed not from it. Not from the commandment of Solomon, according to the order of David, but in all things obeyed it.

"Concerning any matter": Which related to the office of either of them, those sacrificing, singers, or porters.

"Or concerning the treasures": Such of the Levites as had the care of them were faithful to their trust (see 1 Chron. 26:20).

All of this is covered in detail (in 1 Chronicles chapters 24, 25 and 26). The king mentioned here, is David. Each family of the Levites were chosen for a specific ministry. This was re-established by David before his death. Solomon honored the wishes of his father.

2 Chronicles 8:16 "Now all the work of Solomon was prepared unto the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD, and until it was finished. [So] the house of the LORD was perfected."

The materials were prepared, and the money for the expenses. And even the very stones and timber were made fit for the building, so that there was nothing to retard the completion of it.

"So the house of God was perfected": In the space of seven years, in all the parts, and according to the form and pattern of it (see 1 Kings 6:38).

This is showing that Solomon was focused in on the detailed information David had left for him. He wanted the temple to be perfect. He did not let up on the work for a moment, until everything was exactly the way it had been planned.

Verses 17-18: These two ports where Solomon had received ships were located on the eastern gulf of the Red Sea, called Aqabah. Solomon was cultivating peace and commerce plus using Hiram's sailors to teach his people how to sail (see the notes on 1 Kings 9:26; 9:28).

2 Chronicles 8:17 "Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber, and to Eloth, at the sea side in the land of Edom."

Being now at leisure to look after his navy to carry on merchandise; and of this, and the following verse. And the reconciliation of them with (1 Kings 9:26; see notes on 1 Kings 9:26; 9:27, 9:28).

This was located near the Red Sea. David had conquered Edom, and this area was now part of Israel. They were some of those who paid tribute to Solomon.

2 Chronicles 8:18 "And Hiram sent him by the hands of his servants ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought [them] to king Solomon."

"Four hundred and fifty talents": (1 Kings 9:28 reports 420 talents), probably accounted for by a scribal error in transmission. This was about 17 tons of gold.

Solomon had built a navy. Hiram had sent sailors to help man the ships. The following verses help clear this passage up.

1 Kings 9:26-28 "And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which [is] beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom." "And Hiram sent in the navy his

servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon." "And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought [it] to king Solomon."

There are 30 talents difference in the weight in the two Scriptures, but that is unimportant. These Scriptures are speaking of the same thing. Solomon indeed, was the wealthiest king (besides Jesus), that ever lived on the earth.

2 Chronicles Chapter 8 Questions

1. How many years after Solomon began, did he finish the house of the LORD and his own house?
2. What year of his reign would this have been?
3. How many of these years was he building the LORD's house?
4. What are the cities mentioned in verse 2?
5. What does Solomon do to the cities to make them worthwhile?
6. Why had he built the store cities?
7. How is a good way to have peace?
8. Baalath was in the land of _____.
9. What were some of the purposes for the outer cities?
10. What people were left in the land, when their armies were defeated?
11. What did Solomon require of them?
12. What were the men of Israel required to do?
13. How many chief officers did king Solomon have?
14. What were they occupied with doing?
15. Why did Solomon build a house out of the city for Pharaoh's daughter?
16. What was this woman to Solomon?
17. The city of Jerusalem was the city of _____.
18. Where had Solomon built an altar for burnt offerings?

19. What was the altar made of?
20. What were the three times a year the males were required to worship in the temple?
21. What other times did Solomon offer sacrifices?
22. Unleavened Bread and _____ overlap.
23. The Feast of Weeks is the same as _____.
24. Feast of Tabernacles is just after what feast?
25. Who had allotted services for each family of the Levites, that Solomon honored?
26. What is said about the house of the LORD in verse 16?
27. Why was Edom part of Israel?
28. How much gold did they take from Ophir?