

2 Chronicles Chapter 3

Verses 1-17

This is a condensed version of (1 Kings chapter 6), which details the building of “the house of the LORD”.

For amplification and additional material on the building of the temple (see 1 Kings 6:1-38; 7:15-22).

2 Chronicles 3:1 "Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where [the Lord] appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite."

Solomon began to build the temple at “Mount Moriah”, a site rich with Israel’s history (Gen. chapter 22; 1 Chron. Chapter 21).

Each man was willing to pay a dear price in order to do what was acceptable to God.

“Threshing floor”:

See notes on Gen. 22:1-18; 2 Sam. 24:18-25; 1 Chron. 21:20-30.

(See the note on 2 Sam. 24:24).

Mount Moriah was believed to be the spot where Abraham took Isaac to offer him to God.

It was also, the place where David had gone to sacrifice in the threshing floor of Ornan.

This was a place the LORD had chosen, and David said this was the place for the house of the LORD.

2 Chronicles 3:2 "And he began to build in the second [day] of the second month, in the fourth year of his reign."

“Second month ... fourth year”:

Ca. April – May, 966 B.C.; compare 1 Kings 6:1.

The project took 7 years and 6 months to complete (ca. Oct. – Nov. 959 B.C.; compare 1 Kings 6:37-38).

See the note on 1 Kings 6:1.

Solomon began to build in the spring of the year.

April on our calendar is the same as their first month, so this is in May.

The temple was begun somewhere near the 1,000 years before Christ.

Some believe about 980 years prior to Christ.

Really, this is not a critical element.

The fact is the temple had begun.

It appears that Solomon spent some of the 4 years in preparation of the beginning of the work.

It would have been a tremendous job just to gather all of the materials, and the men to do the work.

2 Chronicles 3:3 "Now these [are the things wherein] Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God. The length by cubits after the first measure [was] threescore cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits."

“Cubits ... first measure”:

About 18 inches or possibly the royal cubit which is 21 inches (compare 1 Kings 6:37-38).

This is speaking of the building being 30 feet wide and 90 feet long, if we agree that each cubit is 1-1/2 feet long.

2 Chronicles 3:4 "And the porch that [was] in the front [of the house], the length [of it was] according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the height [was] a hundred and twenty: and he overlaid it within with pure gold."

See the note on 1 Kings 6:3.

The “hundred and twenty” cubits here was apparently miscopied, such a “height” being too disproportionate even for a tower before the building proper.

Some ancient versions read 20 cubits.

Since the height of the building itself was 30 cubits (1 Kings 6:2), some have suggested that the porch was probably the same height.

But if not, this porch would be 30 feet wide.

The height is 180 feet high.

This is extremely high.

Pure gold is 24 kt.

To cover this entire area would be a fortune in gold.

Some question this height.

It is not my place to question, just to explain what each Scripture is saying.

2 Chronicles 3:5 "And the greater house he ceiled with fir tree, which he overlaid with fine gold, and set thereon palm trees and chains."

I.e., the Holy Place, or main chamber of the temple, intervening between the porch and the Holy of Holies (so in 2 Chron. 3:7).

"He ceiled with fir tree":

Rather, "he covered," or "lined."

The reference is not to the ceiling, which was entirely of wood, but to the walls and floor, which were of stone, with a covering of planks (marginal reference).

The word translated "fir" bears probably in this place, not the narrow meaning which it has in (2 Chron. 2:8).

Where it is opposed to cedar, but a wider one in which cedar is included.

"Palm trees and chains":

See 1 Kings 6:29.

The "chains" are supposed to be garlands or festoons.

The greater house is speaking of the Holy Place.

When we compare this with the other Scriptures on the same subject, we find the following.

1 Kings 6:15 "And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: [and] he covered [them] on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir."

The structure was made of stone, but the wood covered the stone and the wood was covered over with pure gold.

The palm trees were engravings.

The chains were probably wreaths of chains in the gold.

2 Chronicles 3:6 "And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty: and the gold [was] gold of Parvaim."

A great many precious stones were dedicated to God (1 Chron. 29:2; 29:8).

And these were set here and there where they would show to the best advantage.

"And the gold was gold of Parvaim":

1 Kings 10:11, tells up the gold was from Ophir, which is a country of uncertain location, possibly southern Arabia or the eastern coast of Africa.

The stones were mounted in the gold for beauty.

The meaning of Parvaim is not known.

2 Chronicles 3:7 "He overlaid also the house, the beams, the posts, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold; and graved cherubims on the walls."

And he covered (2 Chron. 3:5), the chamber.

That is, the great chamber or Holy Place (see 1 Kings 6:21-23).

"The beams":

Of the roof.

"The posts":

The threshold (Isa. 6:4).

"And graved cherubims on the walls":

See (1 Kings 6:29), which gives a fuller account of the mural decorations.

"Cherubims":

Cherubim, or cherubs (Psalm 18:10).

All of the wood within the temple used for beams, posts, or walls were covered with 24 kt. gold.

There were cherubims engraved in the gold on the walls.

Hiram's men would be skilled in this type of engraving.

Their part of the world had been renowned for just this type of beauty.

2 Chronicles 3:8 "And he made the most holy house, the length whereof [was] according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits: and he overlaid it with fine gold, [amounting] to six hundred talents."

The chamber of the Holy of Holies, or chancel, called also the oracle (Dēbîr; 1 Kings 6:5).

"The length whereof was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits":

Its length before the breadth of the house was twenty cubits (see note on 2 Chron. 3:4).

"And the breadth thereof twenty cubits":

1 Kings 6:20), adds that the height also was twenty cubits, so that the chamber formed a perfect cube.

"Six hundred talents":

The weight of gold thus expended on the plating of the walls of the inner shrine is not given in Kings.

Solomon's whole yearly revenue was 666 talents (1 Kings 10:14).

"Fine gold ... six hundred talents":

Equal to almost 23 tons of gold.

The most holy place, where the ark and the mercy seat was, measured thirty feet by thirty feet.

The gold used in covering the walls and all of the boards in this place alone, took 900,000 ounces of gold.

2 Chronicles 3:9 "And the weight of the nails [was] fifty shekels of gold. And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold."

According to the above scale, therefore, this weight would be a twelve-thousandth part for the nails of all the weight of the overlaying plates of gold.

"And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold":

The chambers over the Holy of holies are mentioned in (1 Chron. 28:11).

The two statements of this verse are peculiar to the chronicle.

The Syriac and Arabic omit the verse.

A shekel is a half-ounce of gold, so just the nails weighed 25 ounces of gold.

Verses 10-14

Although he could not build the temple, David had developed elaborate plans for it in concert with the LORD and then given them to Solomon (1 Chron. 28:11-19).

Those plans included the large “cherubims” that stood within “the Most Holy House”.

These cherubims are not directly associated with the lid of the ark of the Covenant as they were in the tabernacle instructions to Moses.

“Two cherubims”:

See note on 1 Kings 6:23.

This free-standing set of cherubim was in addition to the more diminutive set on the ark itself.

2 Chronicles 3:10 "And in the most holy house he made two cherubims of image work, and overlaid them with gold."

"Two cherubims of image work":

They were made of oleaster (A Eurasian shrub or small tree cultivated as an ornamental), plated with gold (1 Kings 6:23-28).

"Of image work":

Literally, a work of statuary (meaning the art or practice of making statues).

"And overlaid":

These figures in the tabernacle were of pure gold (Ex 25:1-40), and overshadowed the mercy seat.

2 Chronicles 3:11 "And the wings of the cherubims [were] twenty cubits long: one 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."

Their length was, altogether, twenty cubits.

So that, being outspread, they reached from wall to wall of the Holy of holies, which was twenty cubits wide.

Of this breadth each cherub covered half, or ten cubits, with his wings, which were five cubits apiece in length.

Obviously, the inner wing of each cherub met the inner wing of the other in the middle of the wall.

"One wing . . . other cherub":

The wing of the one, extending to five cubits, was touching the wall of the chamber while the other wing, five cubits, was touching the wing of the other cherub.

2 Chronicles 3:12 "And [one] 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."

They were of colossal size, like the Assyrian sculptures.

For each, with expanded wings, covered a space of ten cubits in height and length.

Two wings touched each other, while the other two reached the opposite walls.

Their faces were inward, that is, towards the Most Holy House, conformably to their use, which was to veil the ark.

2 Chronicles 3:13 "The wings of these cherubims spread themselves forth twenty cubits: and they stood on their feet, and their faces [were] inward."

Or, These wings of the cherubim.

"Spread themselves forth":

Were outspreading (participle; 1 Chron. 28:18).

"And they stood":

Were standing.

They were ten cubits high (1 Kings 6:26).

"Inward":

See margin.

Translated, toward the chamber.

The cherubs did not face each other like the cherubim on the mercy seat (Exodus 25:20).

The wings of the two cherubims covered the entire area of thirty feet.

The wings left no room on the outside on either side, and they met in the middle over the ark.

They were in the presence of the ark, and had to be covered with pure gold.

The two cherubims were standing at the back of the ark looking with bowed heads to the ark.

It was as if they were in constant worship and protection of the presence of God.

2 Chronicles 3:14 "And he made the veil [of] blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubims thereon."

"Veil" (compare Exodus 26:31-35), on the veil of the tabernacle.

The veil separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, which was entered once annually by the High-Priest on the Day of Atonement (compare Lev. Chapter 16).

This highly-limited access to the presence of God was eliminated by the death of Christ, when the veil in Herod's temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51).

It signified that believers had immediate, full access to God's presence through their Mediator and High-Priest Jesus Christ, who was the perfect, once-for-all sacrifice (compare Heb. 3:14-16; 9:19-22).

This is the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.

Linen speaks of righteousness.

The three colors are godly colors.

"Blue" means heavenly.

"Purple" means royalty.

The crimson is speaking of "red" which means blood or life.

Even the curtains had cherubims woven into the cloth.

Verses 15-17

See the notes on 1 Kings 6:3 and 7:15-22.

2 Chronicles 3:15 "Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high, and the chapter that [was] on the top of each of them [was] five cubits."

“Thirty and five cubits” (1 Kings 7:15; 2 Kings 25:17 and Jer. 52:21), uniformly describe these cast-bronze pillars as 18 cubits high (about 27 feet).

Most likely this is accounted for because the chronicler gave the combined height of both as they were lying in their molds (compare verse 17).

These two pillars were 52 1/2 feet high with chapiters on top of them that were 7 1/2 feet.

2 Chronicles 3:16 "And he made chains, [as] in the oracle, and put [them] on the heads of the pillars; and made a hundred pomegranates, and put [them] on the chains."

“As in the oracle”:

As he had done, or like unto those which he made, in the oracle.

Of which see (1 Kings 6:21).

The particle as is oft understood (as Gen. 49:9; Deut. 33:22).

"A hundred pomegranates":

In each row, or two hundred in all, as it is said (1 Kings 7:20).

These decorations were engraved in the front of the pillars.

The 100 pomegranates were on each of the pillars.

2 Chronicles 3:17 "And he reared 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."

“Jachin ... Boaz”:

Most likely these were so named because of the names’ meaning rather than in honor of particular people.

Jachin means “He shall establish” and Boaz means “In it is strength” (compare 1 Kings 7:21).

It is very unusual for pillars to have names.

We must look for a spiritual meaning behind these names.

These two pillars had messages on them spoken of as an oracle.

"Jachin" means God establishes, so the message on that pillar would mean that.

"Boaz" means strength.

This one would speak of the strength of God.

I do not know the exact wording of what was on the pillars, but I do know in my own heart, they both glorified God.

Boaz was in the ancestry of Jesus.

I personally believe the message for the Christians here, is that we will be established in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Chronicles Chapter 3 Questions

1. Where did Solomon begin to build the temple?
2. What special things had happened at this location?
3. When did Solomon start the building?
4. About how long before Christ was this?
5. What was the size of the temple?
6. What size is the author using for a cubit?
7. How tall was the porch?
8. The porch was overlaid with _____.
9. What is the greater house speaking of?
10. What type of wood was used in the greater house?
11. The wood covered over what?
12. The gold was garnished with what?
13. What was the size of the Most Holy Place?
14. What was the weight of the nails of gold?
15. How many cherubims were in the Most Holy Place?
16. The cherubims were covered with what?

17. How long was the wing span of the cherubims?
18. The cherubims were standing where?
19. Where were they looking?
20. Where was the veil?
21. What was it made of?
22. What does the color "blue" mean?
23. What does "purple" mean?
24. What does "red" mean?
25. What was embroidered on the veil?
26. How tall were the two pillars at the entrance?
27. Why were they called oracles?
28. What were the two pillars named?
29. What does "Jachin" mean?
30. What does the author believe is the message for the Christians in the pillars?