

Survey of the Bible part 34 2Chronicles 1:14 – 4:16

Last week we looked at Solomon's request to the Lord for wisdom and knowledge for a specific reason.

Does anyone remember why he asked God for wisdom and knowledge?

2 Chronicles 1:10 ¹⁰ "Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of Yours?"

And of course, God answers that prayer and would continue to answer that prayer over the lifetime of Solomon's reign over God's people. But the Lord also promised to increase Solomon's wealth, riches and honor as well.

And we get a taste of that toward the end of the 1st chapter of 2nd Chronicles.

2 Chronicles 1:14-17 ¹⁴ Solomon amassed chariots and horsemen. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, and he stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. ¹⁵ The king made silver and gold as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as plentiful as sycamores in the lowland. ¹⁶ Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue; the king's traders procured them from Kue for a price. ¹⁷ They imported chariots from Egypt for 600 *shekels* of silver apiece and horses for 150 apiece, and by the same means they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Aram.

But as we come to chapter 2 Solomon continues what his father David had only dreamed of.

2 Chronicles 2:1-2 ^{NAU 1} Now Solomon ²decided to build a house for the name of the LORD and a ³royal palace for himself. ² So Solomon assigned 70,000 men to carry loads and 80,000 men to quarry *stone* in the mountains and 3,600 to supervise them.

Now a quick calculation shows that Solomon had requisitioned 150,000 men for quarrying and then carrying the stones to Jerusalem. He then puts 3,600 men to supervise them, which works out to be 1 supervisor for every 42 men.

And so, this was a well thought out and calculated approach to accomplishing the project of building the house of the Lord as well

as building a royal palace for himself. This was probably approached much the same way a military campaign would be carried out by soldiers and commanders leading them.

But as we'll see Solomon is going to form a coalition with other kings to carry out this monumental task.

2 Chronicles 2:3-5 ³ Then Solomon sent *word* to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, "As you dealt with David my father and sent him cedars to build him a house to dwell in, so do for me. ⁴ "Behold, I am about to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, dedicating it to Him, to burn fragrant incense before Him and *to set out* the showbread continually, and to offer burnt offerings morning and evening, on sabbaths and on new moons and on the appointed feasts of the LORD our God, this *being required* forever in Israel. ⁵ "The house which I am about to build *will be* great, for greater is our God than all the gods.

Back in 1st Kings we see that Hiram the king of Tyre had a long alliance with Israel, particularly David.

1 Kings 5:1 ^{NAU 1} Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, for Hiram had always been a friend of David.

What's interesting though is that despite Tyre being ruled by pagans, of the nation of Phoenicia, Solomon makes no bones about why he is building this house and to whom he is building this house.

2 Chronicles 2:5 ⁵ "The house which I am about to build *will be* great, for greater is our God than all the gods.

Why do you suppose Solomon was so bold in declaring that his God was greater than all the gods, which by the way, was a direct shot at the gods of the Phoenicians?

Solomon was going to declare the name of his God because he knew that the Lord was the only true God and Creator and the same God who had just spoken to him personally just a short time before.

2 Chronicles 1:6-7 ⁶ Solomon went up there before the LORD to the bronze altar which *was* at the tent of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it. ⁷ In that night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask what I shall give you."

Having an alliance with the king of Tyre was more than just being a friendly neighbor. It was also smart politically, economically, and socially. Tyre and Sidon are both Phoenician cities, (modern day Lebanon). They're strategically placed on or near the coast of the Mediterranean or in those days was known as the Great Sea.

"Tyrian merchants were the first who ventured to navigate the Mediterranean waters; and they founded their colonies on the coasts and neighboring islands of the Aegean Sea, in Greece, on the northern coast of Africa, at Carthage and other places, in Sicily and Corsica, in Spain at Tartessus, and even beyond the pillars of Hercules at Gadeira. Cadiz)" (Driver's Isaiah).

Tyre consisted of two distinct parts, a rocky fortress on the mainland, called "Old Tyre," and the city, built on a small, rocky island about half-a-mile distant from the shore. It was a place of great strength. It was besieged by Shalmaneser, who was assisted by the Phoenicians of the mainland, for five years, and by Nebuchadnezzar (B.C. 586-573) for thirteen years, apparently without success. It afterwards fell under the power of Alexander the Great, after a siege of seven months, but continued to maintain much of its commercial importance till the Christian era.

In A.D. 1291 it was taken by the Saracens, and has remained a desolate ruin ever since.

"The purple dye of Tyre had a worldwide celebrity on account of the durability of its beautiful tints, and its manufacture proved a source of abundant wealth to the inhabitants of that city." Both Tyre and Sidon "were crowded with glass-shops, dyeing and weaving establishments; and among their cunning workmen not the least important class were those who were celebrated for the engraving of precious stones."

And of course Solomon makes note of this in the next few verses of our text.

2 Chronicles 2:7 ⁷ "Now send me a skilled man to work in gold, silver, brass and iron, and in purple, crimson and violet *fabrics*, and who knows how to make engravings, to *work* with the skilled men whom I have in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father provided.

And of course the other thing Tyre had was timber, but not just any timber but cedar, Cyprus and algum that Solomon desired.

2 Chronicles 2:8-9 ⁸ "Send me also cedar, cypress and al gum timber from Lebanon, for I know that your servants know how to cut timber of Lebanon; and indeed my servants *will work* with your servants, ⁹ to prepare timber in abundance for me, for the house which I am about to build *will be* great and wonderful.

At this point the king of Tyre responds in a very interesting way.

2 Chronicles 2:11-12 ¹¹ Then Hiram, king of Tyre, answered in a letter sent to Solomon: "Because the LORD loves His people, He has made you king over them." ¹² Then Hiram continued, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who has made heaven and earth, who has given King David a wise son, endowed with discretion and understanding, who will build a house for the LORD and a royal palace for himself.

Why do you suppose that a pagan king can respond in such a way acknowledging the God of Israel as the one who made heaven and earth?

Whether he was being politically correct or was actually acknowledging the God of Israel as being the one true God who created all things he was willing to meet the needs of Solomon to build the house of God.

And so the king of Tyre sent a number of his servants to help in the construction of the house of the Lord.

2 Chronicles 2:13-18 ¹³ "Now I am sending Hiram-abi, a skilled man, endowed with understanding, ¹⁴ the son of a Danite woman and a Tyrian father, who knows how to work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone and wood, *and* in purple, violet, linen and crimson fabrics, and *who knows how* to make all kinds of engravings and to execute any design which may be assigned to him, *to work* with your skilled men and with those of my lord David your father. ¹⁵ "Now then, let my lord send to his servants wheat and barley, oil and wine, of which he has spoken. ¹⁶ "We will cut whatever timber you need from Lebanon and bring it to you on rafts by sea to Joppa, so that you may carry it up to Jerusalem." ¹⁷ Solomon numbered all the aliens who *were* in the land of Israel, following the census which his father David had taken; and 153,600 were found. ¹⁸ He appointed 70,000 of them to carry loads and 80,000 to quarry *stones* in the mountains and 3,600 supervisors to make the people work.

Chapter three then shows how Solomon began construction on the house of the Lord.

One of the main parts of the house of God was the Ark of the covenant and the cherubim overshadowing it.

2 Chronicles 3:10-11 ¹⁰ Then he made two sculptured cherubim in the room of the holy of holies and overlaid them with gold. ¹¹ The wingspan of the cherubim *was* twenty cubits; the wing of one, of five cubits, touched the wall of the house, and *its* other wing, of five cubits, touched the wing of the other cherub.

And so, with two cherubim's wing span of a total of twenty cubits, 5 and 5 of one and 5 and 5 of the other, a total of twenty cubits was about 34 feet from tip to tip.

That's a large area, but then again this was no ordinary temple being built for the Lord.

By the way, when we speak of Cherubim and those other beings closely associated with them as Seraphim, most bible commentators regard them as some sort of angelic being. The problem with this is that both Cherubim and Seraphim are similar in many ways, not the least of which is their wings.

Seraphim are shown to have six wings, and Cherubim have four wings. Nowhere in the word of God do we see angels being depicted as having wings.

In fact, when angels show themselves to human beings on this earth how do they always show themselves?

As beings that resemble human beings.

Seraphim however, are shown to have six wings, as the prophet Isaiah points out.

Isaiah 6:1-3 ^{NAU} In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. ² Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

The same Seraphim are spoken of in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 4:5-9 ⁵ Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; ⁶ and before the throne *there was something* like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. ⁷ The first creature *was* like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature *was* like a flying eagle. ⁸ And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY *is* THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME." ⁹ And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever,

When these creatures are mentioned in Revelation they also have six wings and what is noteworthy is that instead of the word angels being used the word we have translated is creatures, which is the Greek word *zoon*.

The KJV uses the word beasts. The word *zoon* in the Greek is always used of animals, and so when we speak of Seraphim we are speaking of heavenly, glorious animals given the privilege to surround the throne of God.

In like manner the Cherubim are heavenly beings that have four wings and also have a role around the throne of God.

Ezekiel 1:4-6 ⁴ As I looked, behold, a storm wind was coming from the north, a great cloud with fire flashing forth continually and a bright light around it, and in its midst something like glowing metal in the midst of the fire. ⁵ Within it there were figures resembling four living beings. And this was their appearance: they had human form. ⁶ Each of them had four faces and four wings.

If you look at the phrase in verse 4, "four living beings", it is in reference to four living *chayyah* in the Hebrew.

Can anyone guess as to what the Hebrew word *chayyah* refers to?

Animals.

And so both the Seraphim and the Cherubim are not a class of angels but a class of heavenly animals who serve the purpose of glorifying the Lord around His throne.

Does anyone remember what class of being the Lord placed at the East entrance to the Garden of Eden after Adam and the woman were expelled from the garden after their sin?

Genesis 3:22-24 ²² Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever "-- ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

By the way, what is the position of the Cherubim and Seraphim, in relation to the throne of God?

The Seraphim fly above the throne of God and declare His greatness.

Isaiah 6:1-3 ^{NAU} In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. ² Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

The Cherubim on the other hand stand below Him.

Psalms 99:1 ^{NAU} The LORD reigns, let the peoples tremble; He is enthroned *above* the cherubim, let the earth shake!

Exodus 25:22 ²² "There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.

And so, both the Seraphim and the Cherubim, both are heavenly animals created by God to stand before His throne and are now depicted in the blueprints given to David and now being constructed by Solomon to the size of about 34 feet in total

wingspan between the two Cherubim being represented in the construction.

The 4th chapter of 2nd Chronicles deals with the rest of the measurements of the furnishings of the temple.

And the king of Tyre continues to help in the project as we see.

2 Chronicles 4:11-16 ¹¹ Hiram also made the pails, the shovels and the bowls. So Hiram finished doing the work which he performed for King Solomon in the house of God: ¹² the two pillars, the bowls and the two capitals on top of the pillars, and the two networks to cover the two bowls of the capitals which were on 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 which were on the pillars. ¹⁴ He also made the stands and he made the basins on the stands, ¹⁵ *and* the one sea with the twelve oxen under it. ¹⁶ The pails, the shovels, the forks and all its utensils, Hiram-abi made of polished bronze for King Solomon for the house of the LORD.

Unfortunately for Tyre we see that later in their history God would judge them.

Isaiah 23:1-4 ^{NAU} The oracle concerning Tyre. Wail, O ships of Tarshish, For *Tyre* is destroyed, without house *or* harbor; It is reported to them from the land of Cyprus. ² Be silent, you inhabitants of the coastland, You merchants of Sidon; Your messengers crossed the sea ³ And *were* on many waters. The grain of the Nile, the harvest of the River was her revenue; And she was the market of nations. ⁴ Be ashamed, O Sidon; For the sea speaks, the stronghold of the sea, saying, "I have neither travailed nor given birth, I have neither brought up young men *nor* reared virgins."

Jeremiah 25:17-22 ¹⁷ Then I took the cup from the LORD'S hand and made all the nations to whom the LORD sent me drink it: ¹⁸ Jerusalem and the cities of Judah and its kings *and* its princes, to make them a ruin, a horror, a hissing and a curse, as it is this day; ¹⁹ Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his princes and all his people; ²⁰ and all the foreign people, all the kings of the land of Uz, all the kings of the land of the Philistines (even Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron and the remnant of Ashdod); ²¹ Edom, Moab and the sons of Ammon; ²² and all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon and the kings of the coastlands which are beyond the sea;

Ezekiel 26:1-8 ^{NAU} Now in the eleventh year, on the first of the month, the word of the LORD came to me saying, ² "Son of man, because Tyre has said concerning Jerusalem, 'Aha, the gateway of the peoples is broken; it has opened to me. I shall be filled, *now that* she is laid waste,' ³ therefore thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up many nations against you, as the sea brings up its waves. ⁴ 'They will destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; and I will scrape her debris from her and make her a bare rock. ⁵ 'She will be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,' declares the Lord GOD, 'and she will become spoil for the nations. ⁶ 'Also her daughters who are on the mainland will be slain by the sword, and they will know that I am the LORD.'" ⁷ For thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I will bring upon Tyre from the north Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses, chariots, cavalry and a great army. ⁸ "He will slay your daughters on the mainland with the sword; and he will make siege walls against you, cast up a ramp against you and raise up a large shield against you.

Alexander the Great ultimately accomplished this very thing. He actually built a causeway from the mainland to the island by throwing boulders into the sea as he slowly bridged his way to the island and then conquered the island in 332 B.C.