



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

1 KINGS 12-22 &
2 CHRONICLES

Week 3

Gone to the Dogs

1 Kings 22:29-53

OPENING
up to the Word

Do you like reading biographies? Which ones stand out? Have you learned any life-changing lessons from them?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How did Ahab try to cheat death (vs. 29-30)? Why do you think Jehoshaphat went along with this scheme, as it put him in danger?

2. Did Ahab's trick work (vs. 34-35)? Was Elijah right in how Ahab would die (vs. 37-38)?

3. Who succeeded Ahab (vs. 39-40)?

4. Was Jehoshaphat of Judah a righteous king (vs. 41-43)? Why do you think he had such an affinity for the evil kings of Israel (vs. 44-47)? Why did he refuse to help Ahab's successor (vs. 48-50)?

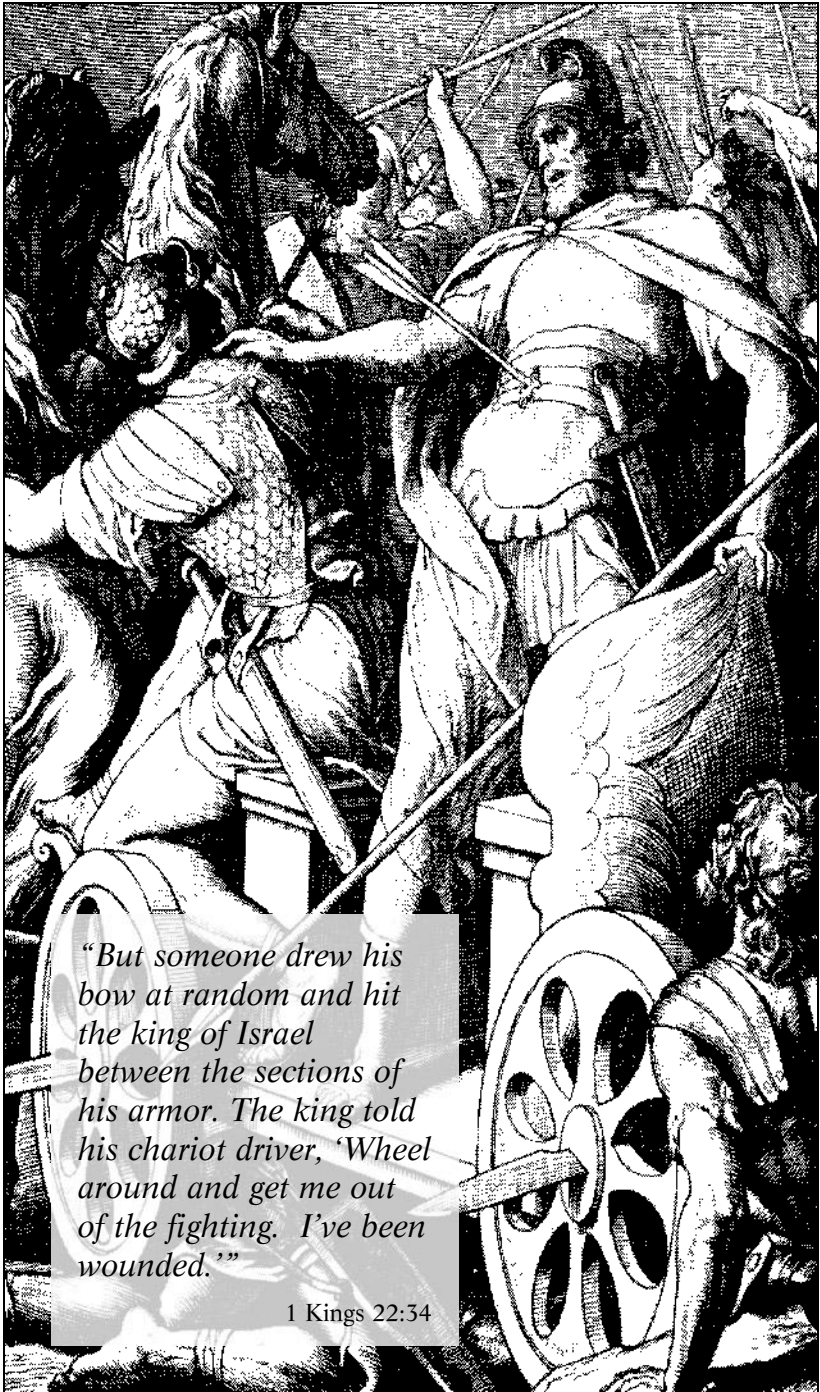
5. Do the concluding words of 1 Kings (vs. 51-53) suggest ominous times for the kingdom of Israel?

LIVING
out the Word

Does 1 Corinthians 15:33 apply to Jehoshaphat? Did his association with the kings of Israel affect his values and ethics in any way (1Ki 22:43)?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Both **Ahab and his father Omri** were renowned kings in the ancient Near East. They are mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions. Ahab was a great chariot general and a great builder. He made extensive additions to Samaria, Megiddo and Hazor—all strategic cities in guarding Israel's northern flank. His "palaces of ivory" have been attested to by archaeology. In Samaria, excavators have found ivory plaques and carvings of Phoenician and native workmanship in abundance. According to Cornfeld and Freedman: "There are indeed few periods in the history of the northern and southern kingdoms when the archaeological finds—written and silent—so accurately reflect the political events and the internal affairs as known to us from the literary sources" (Archaeology of the Bible: Book by Book, page 121).*



“But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. The king told his chariot driver, ‘Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I’ve been wounded.’”

1 Kings 22:34

Introduction to 2 Chronicles 1-9

Authorship: Chronicles was originally one book. It was divided into what we now know as 1 and 2 Chronicles when it was translated from Hebrew to Greek in the third century B.C. The final compiler of Chronicles is unknown, but he had to live well after the Babylonian captivity of the Jews (c. 586-515 B.C.). We know this because the last event in 2 Chronicles deals with the decree of Cyrus of Persia to allow the Jewish exiles to return to their homeland. Also, 1 Chronicles 3:17-24 shows a list of the descendants of Judah's King Jehoiachin/Jehoiachin (reigned 597 B.C.) that extends six generations after the captivity, well into the 400s B.C.

This may be one reason Jewish tradition has nominated Ezra as the final author. Ezra led a group of priests back to Jerusalem around 458 B.C. Evidence supports the hypothesis that someone compiled the book in the time of Ezra and afterwards.

Dates: Some believe the final edits and finished form of Chronicles could have been completed as late as 400-350 B.C. The latest possible date would seem to be 350 B.C., since there is no reference in the text to Greek influence. Also, the fact that the Persian founder Cyrus gets the "last word" in Chronicles (2Ch 36:22-23) is evidence that it was a product of the Persian period (539-331 B.C.). The Jews were on generally good terms with their Persian overlords.

Setting and purpose: 2 Chronicles 1-9 could be titled "The Book of Worship." These chapters are a portrait of Solomon as the idealized leader—the wise king leading the nation in worship and prayer. This fits the theme of Chronicles—a "stir to action" call to the small band of exiles reassembled in Judah to follow the example of the past, to remain true to the monotheism given to them by God and to reap the blessings.

Some commentators have observed that Chronicles reads like a series of sermons. This helps explain why the book was placed in the "Writings" or "Psalms" section, one of the threefold divisions of the Jewish Scriptures (Lk 24: 44). It is more a fast-moving

display of Judah's kings rather than a book, like Kings, concerned with minute historical details and setting.

Distinctive features: 2 Chronicles 1-9 is a tribute to the wisdom, wealth and worship activities of King Solomon. Chapter 2 describes the preparations for the magnificent Temple. Chapters 3-7 deal with the furnishings and dedication of that grand edifice. Solomon's other projects and the visit of the Queen of Sheba (ch. 8-9) are placed as an appendix to the story.

The Chronicler seems determined to present an optimistic picture of Solomon and his reign. The books of Samuel and Kings had been unrelenting in their exposure of the sins that had helped lead Israel to ruin. By contrast, the Chronicler is inspired to give a "pep talk" to the struggling refugees in Judah seeking to rebuild their Temple and the national worship.

J.G. McConville succinctly described the meaning of the Chronicler's portrait of Solomon:

"Chronicles has simply taken the most positive view possible of Solomon's actual career. The Kings and Chronicles accounts, taken together, become another testimony—alongside the whole biblical picture of David—to the way in which God deigns to use great sinners in the work of his kingdom, so much so that the Old Testament's latest picture of Solomon does not even remember his sins" (*I and II Chronicles*, page 110).

This is a hopeful picture. It is a story that stresses God's grace to sinners. The Chronicler has not just written a hopeful picture for the people of his own day. He has composed a noble theme for all time.

Reading outline:

Day	Text	Theme
16	2 Chronicles 1:1-17	The Old Order Changes
17	2 Chronicles 2:1-18	Be Prepared!
18-20	2 Chronicles 3:1-5:10	At Work With a Will
21	2 Chronicles 5:11-14	The Ark of God's Glory
22-25	2 Chronicles 6:1-7:10	Solomon Prays
26	2 Chronicles 7:11-22	A Word From the Lord
27-29	2 Chronicles 8:1-9:21	A Light to the Gentiles
30	2 Chronicles 9:22-31	Glory Days!

KINGS, QARQAR, AND CHRONOLOGY

One of the most challenging tasks for biblical scholarship has been to construct an accurate set of dates for events mentioned in the Bible. Little more than a century ago many accepted the calculations of Archbishop Ussher, an Irish prelate, who used the chronological references given in Genesis to date the creation at 4004 B.C.

That manner of reckoning was bound to fail for many reasons. First, there are gaps in many of the Bible's genealogical records. God did not provide us with such chronological detail in the Bible. God often inspired biblical writers to record brief summaries of complex events (1Ki 15:23-25). Second, the Bible writers are often covering events that overlap. A major complication also comes from the different methods of calculating the reigns of ancient kings. Some date the king's reign from when he began to rule, others begin it with the civil New Year. Often, a father and son were both counted as ruling at the same time. Thus there are many chances for discrepancies in assigning dates.

However, with advances in archaeology in the middle of the 19th century, scholars had better evidence with which to place biblical texts in context. Modern researchers try to correlate biblical data with other ancient sources. The most important of these have been the Assyrian *limmu*-lists uncovered from the ruins of Nineveh and other sites. The *lima* was an official appointed to a post solely for the purpose of dating and documenting his term of office. These *limmu*-lists help shed light on some key events involving biblical characters.

The first campaign dated by the Assyrian *limmu*-list occurred in 853 B.C. In that year Shalmaneser met a coalition of Syro-Palestinian kings at Qarqar, a city north of Syria on the Orontes River. According to Shalmaneser's Monolith Inscription, "Ahab the Israelite" contributed the largest chariot force to that engagement—2000 chariots. In 841 B.C. Shalmaneser was back again to receive tribute from "Iaua (Jehu) son of Omri."

In the words of historians Miller and Hayes: "Shalmaneser's records provide the first two secure 'benchmarks' for developing a chronology of the Israelite and Judean kings" (*A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, page 264).

Money... and Brains

DAY 16

2 Chronicles 1:1-17

If you had a choice would you choose money or wisdom? Why?

1. Leaders must lead. How did Solomon show he understood that principle of leadership (vs. 1-6)?
2. What kind of attitude did Solomon have when he began his reign? Was God pleased (vs. 7-12)?
3. Strong nations are characterized by military might and economic stability. How did Solomon's kingdom rate in those departments (vs. 13-14)?
4. What was the one-sentence description of the effects of Solomon's rule on the people (v. 15)?
5. To which geographic regions did Solomon's kingdom extend (vs. 16-17)? *Kue* is ancient Cilicia, which is in present-day southern Turkey. This shows Solomon's enormous reach from his capital at Jerusalem.

1. Solomon's wealth is celebrated in this chapter. Does physical wealth fit in the Christian life? What did Jesus have to say about it?
2. Some Christians today feel that serving God automatically qualifies one for physical blessings. But aren't the biblical blessings to Christians primarily spiritual (Eph 1:3-10)?
3. For Christians, is wealth a sign of God's blessing?

*"Since Solomon's father had vanquished the Philistines...and since the Davidic kingdom had reached almost to the borders of Egypt in the south, Syria in the north, and Mesopotamia in the east, Solomon was in the enviable position of being the **middleman between fabulously wealthy societies.** Israel was the necessary trade route for all caravans—and, as any businessman will tell you, if your choice is between being a producer of goods or a middleman who takes a percentage, the sure bet is to take the percentage" (Thomas Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews*, page 205).*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Beginning to Build

2 Chronicles 2:1-18

OPENING
up to the Word

What is the biggest project you have ever undertaken? Did you make careful plans before beginning the project, or did you jump right in?

DIGGING
into the Word

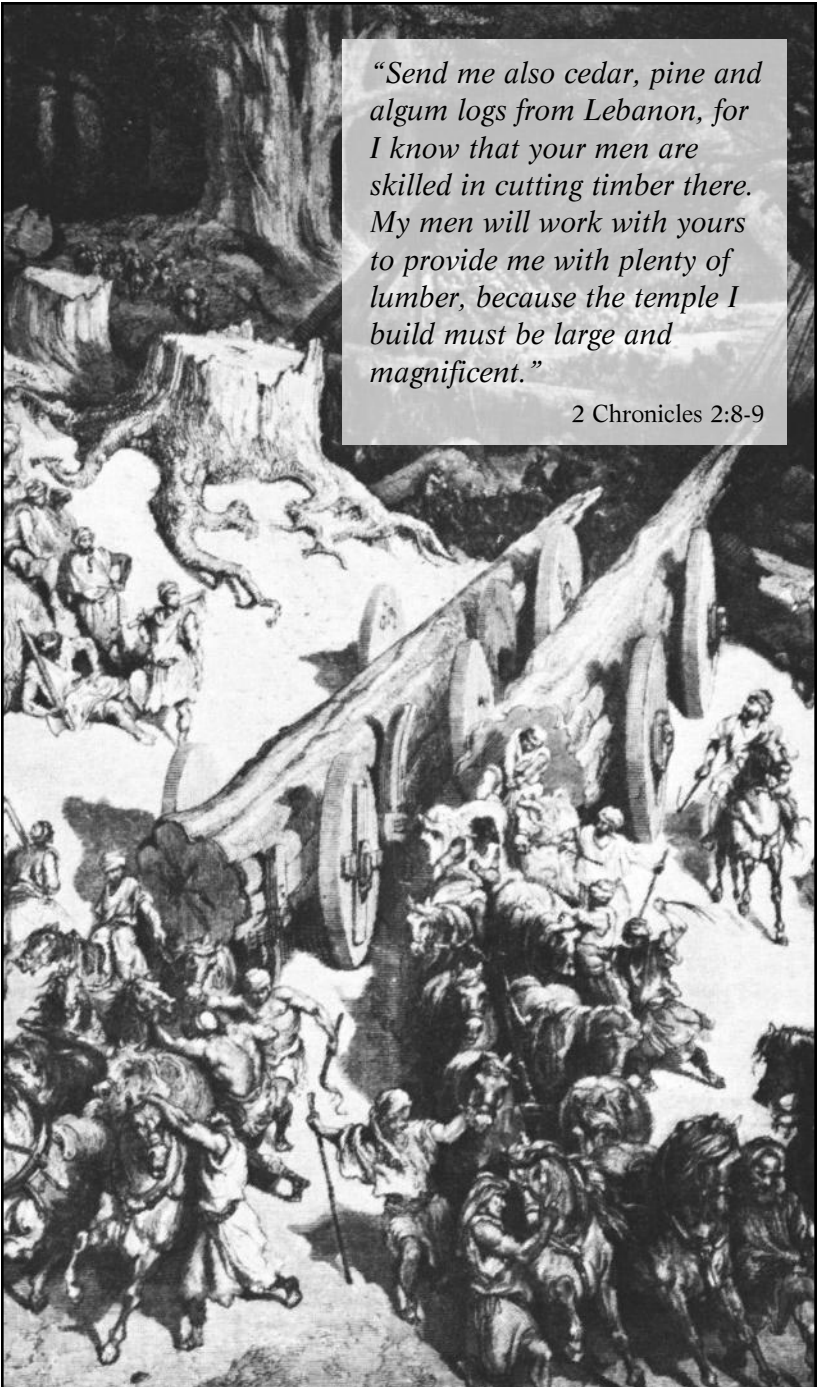
1. What types of workmen did Solomon need to complete his project (vs. 1-2; 17-18)? Does the number of workmen give some idea of the scale of the effort?
2. Was Solomon aware that God is unable to be contained by physical materials (vs. 3-6)? Does Solomon approach this task with humility?
3. It is a wise principle of leadership to get help when faced with huge or daunting tasks. Did Solomon practice this principle (vs. 7-10)?
4. Note that a powerful gentile king showed respect to Israel's God (vs. 11-14). What did Hiram want from Solomon in exchange for his contribution of construction skills (vs. 15-16)?

LIVING
out the Word

Solomon does not hesitate to honor God in this activity. His attitude encourages Hiram to the praise of God. Is there a lesson here for Christians dealing with non-Christians today?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Solomon wisely reminded the Israelites that **the God of Israel was utterly beyond human comprehension.** This God could not be manipulated for selfish ends, not even by King Solomon. The pagan nations had temples and gods galore. They even left food and drink offerings for the gods to eat. Eventually, Israel fell back into this kind of worship (Jer 7:16-19). Yet Israel's God is totally different from the wooden and stone idols of the other nations (Isa 48:16; 61:1). Isaiah sang of this (Isa 44:6-25). This high concept of God and the dedication to **monotheism**, the belief that there is only one God, made Israel's religion unique, and cast a shadow far beyond the time of Solomon.*



“Send me also cedar, pine and algum logs from Lebanon, for I know that your men are skilled in cutting timber there. My men will work with yours to provide me with plenty of lumber, because the temple I build must be large and magnificent.”

2 Chronicles 2:8-9

Built to Last

2 Chronicles 3:1-17

OPENING
up to the Word

What is the most impressive building you have ever seen? What effect did it have on you?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Why do you think the Temple was built where it was (vs. 1-2)?

2. If the “cubit of the old standard” is about 1 1/2 feet, what were the dimensions of the foundation (vs. 3-4)? With what precious metal was the interior overlaid (vs. 4-7)?

3. The Most Holy Place was the most sacred in all of Israel. How far did the cherubim’s wings extend (vs. 8-14)? What was the color scheme on the curtain?

4. What were the decorated bronze columns named (vs. 15-17)? They probably indicated the divine presence, a recollection of the pillars of fire and smoke during the desert wandering (Ex 13:20-22; Ex 33:9; Dt 31:15).

LIVING
out the Word

1. What does Solomon’s Temple point to for New Testament Christians (1Co 3:16-17)?

2. Old Testament structures served a glorious purpose—what was it (Ex 25:8)? How important are physical structures in Christian worship?

WINDOW
on the Word

The spot chosen for the Temple was full of meaning. There David and his people had experienced both the wrath and the mercy of God (1Ch 21:14-15). Tradition states that the site of the Temple was also the spot at which Abraham was spared from offering his son, Isaac. Jesus Christ would come to that very Temple area many times during his ministry, as was predicted (Mal 3:1). Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, was acknowledged by two of the humblest servants in the Temple (Lk 2:25-38). He visited again at age 12 (Lk 2:41-49). Later, he cleaned out its precincts (Jn 2:12-17) and predicted its demise (Mt 24:1-2). Jesus, the One greater than Solomon, knew his work was of more value than all the prestige people gave to the Temple (Mt 12:42; Jn 2:18-22).

Furniture Matters

DAY 19

2 Chronicles 4:1-22

What style of furnishings are found in your home? (a) antique, (b) traditional, (c) contemporary, (d) a little bit of everything.

1. What were the first items a priest would notice upon leaving the Temple (vs. 1-6)? What was the purpose for the ten basins?
2. How many lampstands and tables were there (vs. 7-8)? How many were in the Tabernacle Moses had built (Ex 25:23,31)? This was a minor change, but it served to show that the worship of Israel was dynamic, not static.
3. Who completed the exterior work (2Ch 4:11-18)? What part of the work was directly supervised by Solomon himself (vs. 19-22)?

1. Some of the properties of the Temple system are commented on in the New Testament (see especially the book of Hebrews). What might the brass sea and the basins point toward in the Christian life? Would this include a pre-figuring of the Christian ceremony of baptism?

2. To whom could the lampstands be pointing (Jn 9:5)?

*Some zealous Bible students look for **spiritual significance** in every aspect of the Temple structure. But that might be overdoing things. The pots, shovels, basins, etc. seem to have little intrinsic value as symbols. The Bible's other temples (Eze 40-48; Rev 21-22) are both different from Solomon's structure. The essential fact is that the Temple was the place where God could meet his people. He has fulfilled this promise for all time by coming to dwell among us in the person of Jesus Christ (Jn 1:14).*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

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LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

2 Chronicles 5:1-10

OPENING
up to the Word

Can you name a peak day in your life—a spiritual or emotional “high”—that has been hard to surpass?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Visionary leaders know it is good to respect the contributions of the past. How did Solomon do this (vs. 1-3)?
2. What would be the final resting place of the Ark (vs. 4-10)?
3. Note the phrase at the end of verse 9—“they are still there today.” This expression was apparently written before Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion in 587 B.C. There was no Ark in the Temple constructed after the return from Babylon.
4. Why was the Ark so important to ancient Israel (v. 10)?

LIVING
out the Word

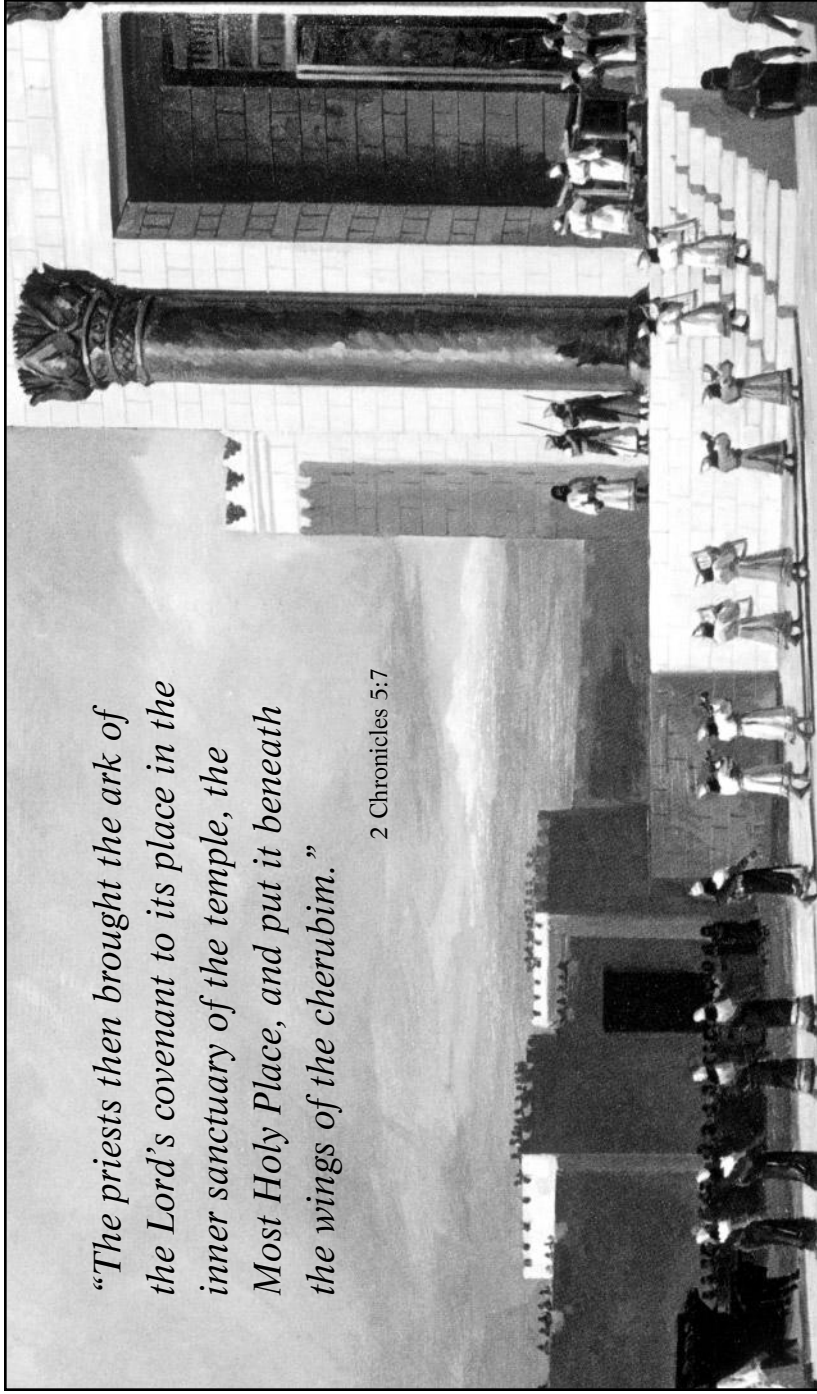
1. Does your church give prominence to ceremony or ritual? Do you see it as (a) beneficial, (b) okay, (c) much ado about nothing? Why?
2. Judgment and grace are complementary themes in Old Testament history. Would this be true for the New Testament as well?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The **Ark of the Covenant** has been the subject of much speculation. It is last mentioned in the time of Josiah (2Ch 35:1-3). Most historians feel it was destroyed at the time of the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar (587-586 B.C.).*

“The priests then brought the ark of the Lord’s covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim.”

2 Chronicles 5:7



DAY 21

Strike Up the Band!

2 Chronicles 5:11-14

OPENING
up to the Word

What kind of music do you like (a) classical, (b) traditional, (c) contemporary, (d) rock, (e) Christian hymns, (f) a little of everything.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What instruments were used in the Temple worship services (vs. 12)?
2. How many priests were assigned to sound the trumpets (v. 12)?
3. Verse 13 mentions that the singers joined in with the trumpeters. Approximately how many musicians had been previously assigned to the Temple (1Ch 25:7)?
4. What was the main theme of the music (2Ch 5:13)?
5. Was God pleased with this form of worship? What sign did he give (vs. 13-14)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Do you have a favorite Christian hymn or spiritual song? What makes it special?

WINDOW
on the Word

Music and God's people have been linked from the beginning. At Creation the morning stars sang together (Job 38:4-7) and when Israel was delivered from slavery, her joy and thanksgiving exploded in both song and dance in the "Song of the Sea" (Ex 15:1-21). It has been said that the Jews were the "singers of the ancient world." Their greatest king, David, was the "Israel's singer of songs" (2Sa 23:1) and Solomon's songs numbered 1005 (1Ki 4:32). The book of Psalms, originally set to music, has been called "the Hymn Book of Humanity." Israelite worship during the Temple period called for large choirs and bands—288 singers (1Ch 25:6-7) accompanied by 120 trumpeters (2Ch 5:12) and many harpists. Ideally, good music brings the intellect and the emotions together. When combined with the words of the biblical text the effect can be a powerful way to express adoration toward or harmony with God.