

2Chronicles 2:1 ¶ And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the LORD, and an house for his kingdom.

2Chronicles 2:2 And Solomon told out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them.

2Chronicles 2:3 And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, *even so deal with me.*

In obedience to the command of his father David, Solomon determined to build a house to honor the LORD and a palace for himself. He appointed 70,000 men to carry material, 80,000 men to cut stone in the mountain and 3,600 men to oversee the work. The king also sent a message to Hiram (aka Hiram), King of Tyre, asking him to provide cedar for him as he had for his father David.

2Chronicles 2:4 Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate *it* to him, *and* to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. *This is an ordinance for ever to Israel.*

2Chronicles 2:5 And the house which I build *is* great: for great *is* our God above all gods.

2Chronicles 2:6 But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who *am* I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?

Solomon told Hiram that he planned to build a house to honor the LORD “my” God at which he could burn incense and make the offerings detailed in the law as recorded by Moses. The king declared that this house had to be very great because it was for “our” God, The God above all gods. He then observed that this was an impossible task since even the heaven of heavens cannot contain God. At least it would serve as a place to offer burnt sacrifices before Him.

I liked these comments from Chuck Smith: “The presence of God is everywhere. You can’t escape the presence of God. And it is always wrong when we try to think of God in a localized place. And yet, it is so often a part of our limited understanding that we always seem to think of God in a locality.... I think that one of the greatest needs of the Christian experience and in the Christian life is to become more conscious of God’s all pervading presence. And at the times when you least feel like it, He is there. In the time when you’re feeling the rottenest, He is there. In the time you’re feeling most desolate, He is there. The most forsaken, He is there. And we need to become aware of His presence.... When I become aware of that, then I want to always live in a way that is pleasing unto Him. Knowing that nothing I do is hidden. Knowing that nothing I do is secret. Knowing that my life is just an open book and that consciousness of God’s presence is such an important thing for my own personal life.”

2Chronicles 2:7 Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that

can skill to grave with the cunning men that *are* with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide.

2Chronicles 2:8 Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees, out of Lebanon: for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and, behold, my servants *shall be* with thy servants,

2Chronicles 2:9 Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build *shall be* wonderful great.

2Chronicles 2:10 And, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.

Solomon then asked Hiram to send him a man that was skilled in working in gold, silver, brass and iron and also able to work with purple, crimson and blue material; he should also be a skilled engraver that could work with the skilled craftsmen of Israel that had been identified by David. He is basically asking for a highly skilled project manager.

The king also asked for cedar trees, fir trees and algum trees out of Lebanon, acknowledging that he could provide the most skilled men at cutting timber. Solomon promised to supply any additional help that was needed. Again he noted that the task was big and would require a whole lot of timber. Solomon committed to paying Hiram's workmen with 20,000 measures of wheat, 20,000 measures of barley, 20,000 baths of wine, and 20,000 baths of oil.

The NIV Commentary provides insight on the use of cedar: "The fragrant cedars of Lebanon were famed throughout the ancient world. They were resistant to decay and superior to any timber native to Palestine."

The IVP Commentary offers this note on the cloth: "These were the most exotic and desirable dyes that were available in the ancient world and were very expensive. They had been used in decorating the tabernacle and in embroidering the priestly vestments. The "blue cloth" has more recently been interpreted as a blue/purple or violet color. The dye for this color was one of the major imports of Phoenicia where it was extracted from the murex snail (*murex trunculus*) which inhabited shallow coastal waters of the Mediterranean. An ancient refinery has also been found at Dor along the northern coast of Israel. One chemist estimated that a quarter of a million snails would be needed to produce one ounce of pure dye. This dye was used in the manufacture of the most sacred objects."

And this note on almug wood: "The algum of Chronicles may be Grecian juniper, a tall coniferlike fir used for timber. Typically they used hardwoods that polished to a fine finish with nice grain or fragrant odor. A number of these woods are also impervious to bugs or mildew."

2Chronicles 2:11 ¶ Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them.

2Chronicles 2:12 Hiram said moreover, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel,

that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the LORD, and an house for his kingdom.

2Chronicles 2:13 And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's,

2Chronicles 2:14 The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father *was* a man of Tyre, skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father.

2Chronicles 2:15 Now therefore the wheat, and the barley, the oil, and the wine, which my lord hath spoken of, let him send unto his servants:

2Chronicles 2:16 And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need: and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to Joppa; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem.

Hiram answered Solomon in writing. He declared that the LORD made Solomon king because the LORD loved his people. He then praised the LORD God of Israel that made heaven and earth, the very same God that had given King David a wise son and blessed him with prudence/wisdom and understanding to be able to build such a temple and palace.

Hiram told Solomon that he was sending a man whose mother was of the tribe of Dan and his father a man of Tyre. He had all the skills that Solomon had requested. He accepted the terms of payment of wheat, barley, oil and wine. He said that they would cut all the wood that was needed from Lebanon and deliver it by floats by the sea to Joppa. Solomon could then arrange for its transport to Jerusalem.

The NIV Commentary adds this note: "Joppa served as the port for inland Judah and for the city of Jerusalem. Before one reached Solomon's capital, however, there were some thirty-five miles of flat, then hilly, and finally rugged terrain."

2Chronicles 2:17 And Solomon numbered all the strangers that *were* in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred.

2Chronicles 2:18 And he set threescore and ten thousand of them *to be* bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand *to be* hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people a work.

Solomon then proceeded to number all the foreigners living in Israel that were able workers and found that there were 153,600. He assigned 70,000 of them to transport material, 80,000 to cut stones in the mountain and 3600 as overseers.

The account in 1Kings also notes that Solomon drafted 30,000 men of Israel to serve in monthly rotations every three months to help Hiram's men.

1 Kings 5:13–14 “And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men. And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy.”