

The Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 12: Solomon's Wisdom and Temple Preparations

2 Chronicles 1:1–2:18

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally, this lesson does two things. First, it lifts up the heart-revealing wisdom of Solomon's request and the kingdom principle that God grants the lesser things to those who seek the greater, fulfilled in Jesus' own teaching (Matthew 6:33; James 1:5). Second, and crucially for a church-of-Christ study, it rightly frames the temple. Solomon's temple was the dwelling of God among His people and a divinely given pattern pointing forward, not an end in itself. The New Testament reveals its fulfillment: Jesus is the true temple (John 2:19–21), and His church is now the holy temple, a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (1 Peter 2:4–5; Ephesians 2:19–22). We must therefore reject the premillennial expectation of a future rebuilt physical sanctuary, since the reality the temple foreshadowed has already come in Christ and His church.

Beyond the doctrine, the lesson aims at the student's transformation. Solomon's prayer asks each of us what we truly love and chase. His confession that the heavens cannot contain God presses us not to confine the Lord to a building or a Sunday hour but to live as His dwelling place every day. The aim is that the student leave seeking God's wisdom for the sake of serving others, reordering desires toward the kingdom, and living, individually and together as the church, as the living temple in which the greatness of God is on display before a watching world.

Question 1

Student Question:

Why does Solomon ask for wisdom and knowledge to lead God's people rather than riches or long life, and what does his request reveal about a heart rightly oriented toward God (2 Chronicles 1:10)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

2 Chronicles 1 opens with Solomon firmly established and worshiping at Gibeon, where God appears with the astonishing offer: ask what I shall give you (1:7). Solomon's answer reveals the orientation of his heart. He asks for wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in before this people, to govern God's great nation.

Notice the motive. Solomon's request is not self-serving; it is for the sake of the people God has entrusted to him. He recognizes the weight of the task, who is able to judge this great people of Yours (1:10), and asks for what he needs to serve, not to be served.

His humility is striking. He calls himself a little child who does not know how to go out or come in (the parallel in 1 Kings 3:7). A heart rightly oriented toward God knows its own insufficiency and seeks God's enabling for God's purposes.

This is wisdom about wisdom: the highest thing a leader can want is not power or wealth but the God-given capacity to serve God's people well. What we ask for when we can ask anything exposes what we truly value.

James 1:5 carries the principle forward: God still gives wisdom generously to those who ask. Solomon's prayer is a model for every believer who feels the weight of a task too big for them.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Our deepest requests reveal what we truly love.
- Solomon sought wisdom to serve others, not to exalt himself.
- A right heart knows its insufficiency and seeks God's enabling.
- God still gives wisdom generously to those who ask (James 1:5).

Discussion Prompts

- What would you ask for if God said, 'ask what I shall give you'?
- Why is Solomon's request so revealing of his heart?
- How does this challenge what we usually chase?

Question 2

Student Question:

What do your own prayers and ambitions most often ask for, and where do you need God to reorder your desires toward what truly matters to Him?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns Solomon's prayer into a mirror. Our habitual requests, what we pray for most, what we daydream about, what we work hardest to secure, map the geography of our hearts. Solomon asked for wisdom to serve; what do we ask for?

Many of us pray almost entirely for comfort, relief, and success, the very things Solomon did not ask for first. This is not wrong in itself, but it can reveal a heart oriented around self rather than God and others.

Encourage honest examination of the prayer life and the ambition list. What occupies our requests? What do we want badly enough to sacrifice for? The answers locate the heart.

The goal is reordered desire. Invite students to ask God to reshape their wants, to make them long for wisdom, for usefulness, for the kingdom, more than for ease.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Our habitual prayers and ambitions map our hearts.
- Praying mainly for comfort can reveal a self-centered orientation.
- Reordered desire is the goal, not mere behavior change.
- God can reshape what we want.

Discussion Prompts

- What do your prayers most often ask for?
- What do your ambitions reveal about your heart?
- Where do you need God to reorder your desires?

Question 3

Student Question:

What principle is revealed in God granting Solomon wisdom and then adding riches and honor he did not ask for (2 Chronicles 1:11–12), and how does this anticipate Jesus' teaching to seek first the kingdom of God?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

God's reply in 2 Chronicles 1:11–12 establishes a profound principle. Because Solomon asked for wisdom and not for riches, wealth, honor, or the life of his enemies, God grants the wisdom and adds the riches and honor as well. The pursuit of the greater thing brought the lesser things in its train.

This is not a transaction or a formula for getting rich; it is the revelation of how God's economy works. When we seek what serves God and His people, God often supplies our other needs besides. The heart set on the right thing finds its hands filled.

Jesus states the principle directly in Matthew 6:33: seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Solomon's experience is an Old Covenant picture of this kingdom-first truth.

Guard against the prosperity distortion. The point is not that godliness guarantees wealth, but that God can be trusted to care for those who put His priorities first. Solomon's wealth served his calling; it was not the goal of his prayer.

For the believer, this dethrones anxiety. We are freed to seek first the kingdom, trusting the God who knows our needs to provide as He sees fit (Matthew 6:31–33).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Seeking the greater thing often brings the lesser besides.

- This reveals God's economy, not a formula for wealth.
- Jesus states the principle plainly in Matthew 6:33.
- Guard against the prosperity-gospel distortion.
- Kingdom-first living dethrones anxiety about provision.

Discussion Prompts

- How does Solomon's experience illustrate seeking first the kingdom?
- Why is this not a formula for getting rich?
- How does kingdom-first living free us from anxiety?

Question 4

Student Question:

Where have you been seeking the gifts of God more than God Himself, and what would it look like to seek first His kingdom and trust Him for the rest?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question presses the seek-first principle into the student's life. It is easy to want God's blessings more than God Himself, to pursue the gifts while neglecting the Giver, to treat the kingdom as a means to our comfort rather than the goal of our lives.

Invite self-examination. Do we seek God for what He gives or for who He is? Has our faith quietly become transactional, obeying in order to secure benefits, rather than loving God for His own sake?

Seeking first the kingdom is concrete: ordering our calendars, finances, and priorities around God's purposes and trusting Him with the rest. It is a daily reorientation, not a one-time decision.

Encourage one specific way to seek first the kingdom this week, putting a kingdom priority ahead of a personal comfort and trusting God for the outcome.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- We can want God's gifts more than God Himself.
- Faith can drift into a transactional pursuit of benefits.
- Seeking first the kingdom is concrete and daily.
- Trusting God with provision is part of seeking first.

Discussion Prompts

- Do you seek God for who He is or for what He gives?
- Where have you sought the gifts more than the Giver?

- What is one way to seek first the kingdom this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

When Solomon says the house he will build must be great because our God is greater than all gods (2 Chronicles 2:5), what is he teaching about the purpose of the temple and the supremacy of God?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

In 2 Chronicles 2:5 Solomon explains why the temple must be magnificent: the house I am to build will be great, for our God is greater than all gods. The grandeur was not for Israel's prestige but to declare God's surpassing greatness.

Solomon understood the purpose of the temple. It existed for the name of the Lord (2:1, 4), as a place to honor and worship Him, to display His supremacy over the false gods of the nations. Everything about it pointed beyond itself to God.

This is a crucial corrective to a common temptation: making our religious efforts about ourselves, our impressiveness, our reputation, our achievement. Solomon's building was God-centered; its greatness testified to a greater God.

The phrase greater than all gods is a confession of monotheistic supremacy. The surrounding nations had their idols; Israel's God is the living God, above all, incomparable. The temple proclaimed this truth in stone and gold.

For us, the principle stands: whatever we build, do, or give in God's service should point to His greatness, not ours (compare 1 Corinthians 10:31, do all to the glory of God).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The temple existed to display God's greatness, not Israel's.
- Our religious efforts should point to God, not ourselves.
- God's greatness is supreme over all rivals.
- All we do should be for God's glory (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Discussion Prompts

- What was the true purpose of the temple's magnificence?
- How can our service point to God's greatness rather than our own?
- Where do our efforts subtly become about our reputation?

Question 6

Student Question:

In what ways do your efforts, your work, your service, your giving, point to the greatness of God, and in what ways have they subtly become about your own reputation?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns Solomon's God-centered building into a personal examination. Our work, service, and giving can point to God's greatness, or they can quietly become monuments to our own, a way of being seen, admired, and praised.

The motive is hard to see in ourselves. The same good deed can glorify God or feed our ego. Jesus warned against doing righteous acts to be seen by others (Matthew 6:1). The question is whose greatness our efforts ultimately display.

Encourage honest reflection on areas where service has drifted toward self-promotion, the need for recognition, the wounded pride when we go unthanked, the performance done for an audience of people.

The aim is recalibration: to do our work as Solomon built the temple, deliberately for God's glory, content to be unseen if God is honored.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Service can point to God's greatness or feed our ego.
- Motives are hard to see in ourselves.
- Jesus warns against righteousness done to be seen (Matthew 6:1).
- The aim is to serve deliberately for God's glory.

Discussion Prompts

- Does your service point to God's greatness or your own?
- Where has your work become about being seen?
- How can you recalibrate toward God's glory?

Question 7

Student Question:

What does Solomon mean when he confesses that the heavens cannot contain God, so no one is truly able to build Him a house (2 Chronicles 2:6), and how does this guard us from reducing God to a building or a place?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Solomon's confession in 2 Chronicles 2:6 is remarkable for a man about to build the most glorious structure of his age: who is able to build Him a house, seeing the heaven and the

heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? He builds a house while confessing that no house can contain God.

This is the doctrine of God's transcendence. God is infinite; He fills heaven and earth (Jeremiah 23:24); He cannot be localized, boxed, or possessed. The temple was a gracious meeting place, not a container for the Almighty.

Solomon clarifies the temple's purpose: it is a place to burn incense before Him (2:6), to worship, not a dwelling that limits God. The building served the relationship; it did not confine the God.

This guards against a perennial error: reducing God to a place or an object, treating a building as holy in itself, or imagining God is more present in one location than another. The infinite God is not contained by human structures.

The truth prepares us for the New Testament revelation that God dwells not in temples made with hands (Acts 7:48–49; 17:24) but in Christ and in His people. Solomon's confession leans forward toward that fuller truth.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God is transcendent and infinite; no building can contain Him.
- The temple was a meeting place, not a container for God.
- We must not reduce God to a place or object.
- God does not dwell in temples made with hands (Acts 7:48–49).

Discussion Prompts

- How can Solomon build a house while saying no house can contain God?
- What does God's transcendence guard us against?
- How does this prepare us for the New Testament truth about God's dwelling?

Question 8

Student Question:

Where are you tempted to confine God to a building, a ritual, or a single hour on Sunday, rather than living before Him every day as His dwelling place?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question applies Solomon's confession to the way we live. If the heavens cannot contain God, then it is folly to confine Him to a building, a ritual, or a single hour on Sunday. Yet we often do exactly that.

Many believers compartmentalize God, religious on Sunday, secular the rest of the week, as though God lived in the church building and stayed there when we left. Solomon's confession exposes the error.

The New Testament truth makes the point sharper: Christians are themselves the temple where God dwells by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). God is not confined to a place; He lives in His people and goes with them everywhere.

Encourage students to examine where they have boxed God in, and to begin living before Him every day, in the home, the workplace, the unseen moments, as His dwelling place rather than His weekend visitors.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- We tend to confine God to a building or a Sunday hour.
- Compartmentalized faith contradicts God's nature.
- Christians are the temple where God dwells by His Spirit.
- We are to live before God every day, everywhere.

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you confine God to a building or a single hour?
- How does compartmentalized faith contradict God's nature?
- What does it mean to live every day as God's dwelling place?

Question 9

Student Question:

Bring the temple into the light of the New Testament: how does Solomon's temple, the dwelling of God among His people that the heavens could not contain, point forward to Jesus as the true temple (John 2:19–21) and to the church as a holy temple built of living stones, a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (1 Peter 2:4–5; Ephesians 2:19–22), and why does this mean we should not look for a future rebuilt physical sanctuary?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Here the lesson reaches its doctrinal summit and must be handled with care. Solomon's temple was real and glorious, the dwelling of God among His people under the Old Covenant, yet Solomon himself confessed the heavens could not contain God. The temple was always a pointer, a divinely given pattern, anticipating a greater reality to come.

The New Testament unveils that reality in stages. First, Jesus is the true temple. When He said, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up, He spoke of the temple of His body (John 2:19–21). In Christ the fullness of deity dwells bodily (Colossians 2:9); He is where God truly meets humanity. The stone-and-gold temple foreshadowed the incarnate Son.

Second, the church is now the temple of God. Peter calls Christians living stones, built into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:4–5). Paul says the church is built together into a holy temple in the Lord, a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19–22). The reality Solomon’s building shadowed has come: God dwells among and within His redeemed people.

This carries a vital doctrinal consequence for our study. Because the temple’s purpose is already fulfilled in Christ and His church, we do not look for a future rebuilt physical sanctuary as the focus of God’s plan. The premillennial and dispensational expectation of a restored temple with reinstated animal sacrifices misreads the foreshadowing as if it awaited a future literal repetition, when in fact the substance has already come (Hebrews 8 through 10 shows the Old Covenant sacrificial system fulfilled and set aside in Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice).

The trajectory is clear and complete: a physical temple under Moses, fulfilled in Christ the true temple, realized now in the church as God’s living temple, and consummated in the new heavens and new earth where, John says, there is no temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (Revelation 21:22). God’s dwelling with His people is the goal, accomplished in Christ, not awaiting another building made with hands. Our calling is to be that living temple now, holy, Spirit-indwelt, displaying the greatness of God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Solomon’s temple was a God-given pattern pointing forward, not an end in itself.
- Jesus is the true temple where God meets humanity (John 2:19–21; Colossians 2:9).
- The church is now God’s temple, built of living stones (1 Peter 2:4–5; Ephesians 2:19–22).
- We reject the premillennial expectation of a future rebuilt physical sanctuary.
- The Old Covenant sacrificial system is fulfilled and set aside in Christ (Hebrews 8 through 10).
- The consummation has no temple, for God and the Lamb are its temple (Revelation 21:22).
- We are called to live as the Spirit-indwelt temple displaying God’s greatness now.

Discussion Prompts

- How does Solomon’s temple point forward to Jesus and to the church?
- Why does the fulfillment in Christ mean we do not await a rebuilt physical temple?
- What does it mean for us to be God’s living temple today?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking back over Solomon’s wise request and his temple preparations, name one specific way Jesus is calling you, as part of His living temple, to seek His wisdom and to let your life display the greatness of God this week.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The capstone gathers the lesson into a personal response. We have seen Solomon's heart-revealing request for wisdom and his God-exalting purpose in building, and we have learned that we are now God's living temple in Christ.

Invite students to name one specific way to seek God's wisdom this week, perhaps in a decision, a relationship, or a service, asking God as James 1:5 invites, and one specific way to let their lives display God's greatness rather than their own.

Tie the two together as Solomon's life did: wisdom sought for the sake of serving God's people, and everything done to declare that our God is greater than all gods.

Close with the dignity and weight of the truth. As part of Christ's living temple, the believer's ordinary week, work, words, choices, is the place where the greatness of God is meant to be seen by a watching world. Seek His wisdom, and let His greatness shine through you.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Response must be specific to become obedience.
- Wisdom is sought for serving, not merely for self.
- As God's living temple, our lives display His greatness.
- Ordinary life is the arena where God's greatness is seen.

Discussion Prompts

- Where do you most need God's wisdom this week?
- How can your life display the greatness of God?
- What does it mean that you are part of God's living temple?