

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

Lesson 13: Building the House of the Lord

2 Chronicles 3:1-5:1

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Doctrinally, this lesson must keep the temple in its rightful place as a God-given pattern, not an end in itself. The house Solomon built was magnificent, but its glory pointed beyond itself to the One who would tabernacle among us and to the church that is now the temple of God. The teacher should guard the class against two errors: dismissing the Old Testament details as irrelevant, and treating the physical temple as a blueprint for some future earthly sanctuary in a coming political kingdom. The kingdom and house of God are spiritual realities established now in Christ, who reigns over His church.

At the same time, the lesson aims squarely at the heart. The lavish care of the temple rebukes our casual, leftover worship and calls us to give God our best. The holiness of the Most Holy Place presses us toward reverence. The pillars Jachin and Boaz invite us to lean our whole weight on God for stability. The teacher should help students see themselves as living stones, individually being shaped and corporately being built, so that they leave not merely informed about ancient architecture but recommitted to being a holy dwelling for God.

Throughout, anchor every application in the text. Let the gold, the cherubim, the veil, and the bronze sea each open a window onto the character of God and the privilege and responsibility of drawing near to Him through Christ.

Question 1

Student Question:

Why does the Chronicler emphasize that the temple was built on Mount Moriah at the threshing floor of Ornan, and what does that chosen ground reveal about how God ties worship to His prior acts of provision and mercy?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The Chronicler opens with a deliberate geographical note: Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to David, at the place David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. This single verse layers together generations of God's dealings. Moriah is the region where Abraham was sent to offer Isaac in Genesis 22, the place where God provided a substitute. The threshing floor of Ornan is where David, in 1 Chronicles 21, saw the destroying angel and built an altar so that the plague was stayed.

This is no accident of real estate. The Chronicler, writing to a post-exilic community trying to rebuild their identity around worship, wants them to see that the house of God stands on holy history. Worship is not invented; it is a response to what God has already done. The very ground proclaims provision and mercy before a single sacrifice is offered.

For the teacher, this is a chance to model how to read Chronicles. The book is intensely interested in the temple and the worship of God, and it constantly ties present worship to God's past faithfulness. Israel was to remember that they did not earn God's presence; He graciously chose to dwell among them.

The application reaches forward. The hill of provision and the place where judgment was halted by an altar foreshadow the cross, where God provided the true Lamb and where wrath was satisfied. We worship today on the ground of what God has done in Christ, not on the basis of our own merit.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- God roots worship in His own prior acts of grace, not in human invention or merit.
- The choice of Moriah connects the temple to Abraham's offering of Isaac and God's provision.
- The threshing floor of Ornan recalls mercy halting judgment, foreshadowing the cross.
- Chronicles consistently links present worship to God's past faithfulness.

Discussion Prompts

- Trace the history of Mount Moriah from Abraham to David to Solomon. What is God teaching by building His house there?
- How does remembering God's past faithfulness change the way we worship today?
- In what ways does the ground of our worship rest on what God has done in Christ rather than on our own goodness?

Question 2

Student Question:

When you consider the costly, careful beauty given to God's house, where do you sense God asking you to upgrade the quality of attention and effort you bring to worshiping Him?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The text dwells on the sheer cost and beauty of the temple: gold overlaying the house, precious stones for adornment, gold by the talent, finely worked cherubim. Solomon spared nothing. This was the best a kingdom could give, offered to the God who had given them everything.

It is worth pausing on the contrast with how we often approach worship. We can become casual, offering God the tired remnants of our time and attention while reserving our best

energy for career, hobbies, and comfort. The temple's extravagance is a standing rebuke to spiritual stinginess.

Yet the point is not that God needs gold. Scripture is clear that the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands and is not served by human hands as though He needed anything (Acts 17:24–25). The gold expressed the heart of a people who loved God and wanted to honor Him with their best.

The application is direct. What we give God reveals what we treasure. When worship costs us nothing, it usually means God means little to us in that moment. The lesson invites students to examine the quality, not just the quantity, of what they bring to the Lord.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The costliness of the temple reflects wholehearted devotion, not divine need.
- What we offer God reveals what we truly treasure.
- Casual, leftover worship dishonors the God who gave us everything.
- Quality of devotion matters, not merely outward participation.

Discussion Prompts

- What does it look like practically to bring God your best rather than your leftovers in worship and daily life?
- Why is it important to remember that God does not need our gifts even as He desires our devotion?
- Where has worship started to cost you nothing, and how might you recover wholeheartedness?

Question 3

Student Question:

What is the significance of the Most Holy Place, the veil, and the cherubim within the temple, and what do they teach about God's holiness and the careful approach His presence required under the old covenant?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The Most Holy Place, twenty cubits by twenty cubits, overlaid with fine gold, housed the great cherubim whose wings stretched across the entire room. A veil of blue, purple, crimson, and fine linen separated this inner room. This was the place of God's manifest presence, entered only once a year by the high priest with blood.

The careful gradations of the temple, the courts, the holy place, the most holy place, taught Israel a profound truth: God is holy, and approach to Him is not casual. There is a barrier between sinful people and a holy God. The veil itself preached that lesson every day.

The cherubim, those guardian figures first seen barring the way back to Eden, now overshadow the place of mercy. They remind us both of God's unapproachable holiness and of His gracious provision of a way to meet with His people.

For the Christian, the wonder is that the veil was torn at the death of Christ (Matthew 27:51), and we now have access into the holy places by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19–22). But that access never makes God common. Reverence remains. The teacher should help students hold together boldness and awe.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The temple's structure taught the holiness of God and the barrier sin creates.
- The veil signified restricted access under the old covenant.
- The cherubim recall Eden and God's holiness, yet overshadow mercy.
- Christ's death tore the veil, granting access without erasing reverence.

Discussion Prompts

- What does the layered structure of the temple teach about God's holiness?
- How should the torn veil shape both our confidence and our reverence in approaching God?
- In what ways do we tend to treat God as common, and how do we recover awe?

Question 4

Student Question:

In what specific area of your life have you grown careless about God's holiness, treating as common what He calls holy, and how might recovering reverence change you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Question four turns the holiness of God inward. The same God who could not be approached carelessly in the temple is the God we serve, and reverence is not optional for His people. Yet we often grow casual, treating as common what God calls holy: His name, His day of worship, His word, His table, His church.

Carelessness usually creeps in quietly. We stop preparing our hearts for worship. We let our speech grow loose. We treat the assembly of the saints as one optional event among many. None of it feels dramatic, but it slowly erodes a sense of the holy.

The remedy is not legalism but recovered wonder. When we remember who God is, reverence becomes natural rather than forced. The teacher can invite honest self-examination here without shaming, helping students name the specific places carelessness has crept in.

Application: ask students to identify one habit, one area of speech, or one attitude where they have lowered the standard, and to bring it deliberately back under God's holiness this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Reverence for God's holiness applies to His people in everyday life.
- Carelessness creeps in quietly through small compromises.
- Recovered wonder, not legalism, is the cure for casual hearts.
- Honest self-examination opens the door to renewed reverence.

Discussion Prompts

- Where have you started treating something God calls holy as common?
- What practical step would help you recover reverence in that area?
- How can we cultivate wonder rather than mere rule-keeping?

Question 5

Student Question:

What did the two pillars named Jachin and Boaz, standing at the entrance, communicate to Israel about the stability and strength that belong to God alone?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Solomon set up two great bronze pillars at the front of the temple, naming the one on the right Jachin and the one on the left Boaz. The names carry meaning: Jachin suggests He shall establish, and Boaz suggests in Him is strength. Standing at the threshold, they preached a sermon to everyone who entered.

The message was about God, not about Israel. The stability of the nation and the strength to stand did not rest in their armies or their cleverness but in the Lord who establishes. Every worshiper passing between those pillars was reminded where true security lies.

Chronicles, written to a fragile community that had returned from exile, would find deep comfort here. They had no great army, no powerful king, but the God who establishes was still their strength. The pillars said: lean here.

The application presses on us. We are constantly tempted to find our stability in money, status, relationships, or our own competence. The pillars call us to rest our full weight on God, the only foundation that will not crack under pressure.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Jachin and Boaz proclaimed that God establishes and God is our strength.
- True stability rests in the Lord, not in human resources.
- The pillars comforted a fragile post-exilic community.
- We are tempted to lean on lesser supports that cannot hold us.

Discussion Prompts

- What do the names Jachin and Boaz teach us about where our security lies?
- How does this message especially comfort God's people in seasons of weakness?
- What lesser supports are you leaning on instead of God?

Question 6

Student Question:

Whom or what have you been leaning on for stability and strength instead of resting your weight on God, and what would it take to lean fully on Him?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self-question follows naturally from the pillars. We all lean on something. The honest believer admits that under pressure we instinctively reach for control, savings, approval, or our own abilities before we reach for God.

The danger is that these supports feel solid until the day they fail. A job ends, health falters, a relationship breaks, and the thing we leaned on gives way. God invites us to transfer our weight to Him before the crisis, not only after.

Leaning on God is not passivity. It is the active discipline of prayer, trust, obedience, and dependence, choosing to believe that He establishes and that in Him is strength even when circumstances are shaky.

Application: help students name the specific support they default to, and identify one concrete practice, such as prayer before decisions or generosity that loosens money's grip, that shifts their trust toward God.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Everyone leans on something for stability.
- Lesser supports feel solid until they fail.
- Trusting God is an active discipline, not passivity.
- We can transfer our weight to God before the crisis comes.

Discussion Prompts

- What do you instinctively reach for when life feels unstable?
- How can you practice leaning on God before a crisis forces it?
- What is one concrete habit that would deepen your dependence on Him?

Question 7

Student Question:

What do the bronze sea, the lavers, and the other furnishings used for cleansing reveal about the necessity of purity for those who would draw near to God?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The text describes the bronze sea resting on twelve oxen, holding a vast quantity of water, along with ten lavers for washing what was used in sacrifice. The sea was for the priests to wash. All of this had to do with cleansing, with the practical recognition that no one may serve a holy God while defiled.

Under the law, the priests washed before they ministered. The lesson was unmistakable: purity is required for those who draw near. God does not receive the unclean into His service without cleansing.

The Chronicler's first readers, restored from exile, needed to relearn the holiness of worship. The washing vessels were a constant visual sermon that approach to God demands purity.

For the Christian, this points to the cleansing we have in Christ, who washes us and to which baptism and ongoing confession bear witness (Titus 3:5, 1 John 1:7–9). Purity is still required, and it is still God who provides the cleansing. The teacher should connect the bronze sea to the believer's call to holiness and to God's gracious provision of cleansing.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The washing vessels taught that purity is required to draw near to God.
- Priests washed before ministering; the unclean could not serve.
- Approach to a holy God demands cleansing He provides.
- Christ cleanses His people, and the call to purity remains.

Discussion Prompts

- Why does drawing near to God require cleansing?
- How does God provide the cleansing He requires?
- What does the ongoing need for purity mean for the Christian's daily walk?

Question 8

Student Question:

What is one area where you have tolerated a low standard of holiness, and how can you cooperate with God's cleansing rather than excusing the stain?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Question eight turns the call to purity inward. We can grow comfortable with sins we have tolerated for years, treating them as part of the furniture of our lives. The bronze sea confronts that complacency.

Often we excuse the stain. We call it a personality quirk, blame circumstances, or compare ourselves to those who seem worse. But God calls His people to holiness, and excusing sin keeps us from the cleansing He offers.

Cooperating with God's cleansing means agreeing with Him about the sin, confessing it honestly, and walking in the light rather than hiding. This is not self-improvement by willpower but yielding to the Lord who purifies.

Application: invite students to identify one tolerated, low-standard area and to bring it into the light this week through confession and a concrete step away from it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- We grow comfortable with long-tolerated sins.
- Excuses keep us from God's cleansing.
- Cooperating with God means honest confession, not hiding.
- Holiness is yielded to God, not achieved by willpower alone.

Discussion Prompts

- What sin have you quietly tolerated and excused?
- What does it mean to cooperate with God's cleansing rather than resist it?
- What concrete step will you take this week to walk in the light?

Question 9

Student Question:

How is the entire temple, its Most Holy Place, its veil, its priesthood, and its sacrifices, a pattern fulfilled in Jesus Christ and in His church, so that we read these chapters not as a blueprint for a future rebuilt physical sanctuary but as a shadow of the true and living temple now realized in Christ and His people?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Here is the doctrinal heart of the lesson. The entire temple, with its Most Holy Place, veil, priesthood, sacrifices, and furnishings, was a divinely given pattern, a shadow of better things. Hebrews makes this explicit, calling the earthly sanctuary a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, fulfilled when Christ entered the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands (Hebrews 8:5, 9:11-12, 9:23-24).

Jesus Himself is the true temple. In John 2:19–21 He spoke of the temple of His body, the meeting place of God and humanity. The veil that barred the way was torn at His death, opening access to God through His blood. The animal sacrifices that could never take away sin pointed to the one perfect offering of Christ.

And the temple finds further fulfillment in the church. Peter calls Christians living stones being built into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:4–5). Paul says the church is being built into a holy temple, a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19–22), and that we ourselves are God’s temple in whom the Spirit dwells (1 Corinthians 3:16–17). The glory that once filled a building now dwells in a people.

This is precisely why we must not read these chapters as a blueprint for a future rebuilt physical sanctuary in some coming earthly kingdom. The kingdom of God is not a future political arrangement with a restored stone temple and reinstituted animal sacrifices. To return to that would be to go backward from substance to shadow, from Christ to type. The throne of David is occupied now by the risen Christ reigning at God’s right hand over His church (Acts 2:29–36), and the house of God today is the church of the living God (1 Timothy 3:15).

So the teacher should lift the class from architecture to Christ. Every golden detail of Solomon’s temple whispers the name of Jesus and describes the privilege of being part of His body. We do not look forward to bronze and cedar; we look to the One who is greater than the temple (Matthew 12:6) and to the spiritual house He is building of us.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The temple was a God-given pattern and shadow, not an end in itself.
- Jesus is the true temple, the meeting place of God and humanity.
- The torn veil and the one perfect sacrifice fulfill the old system.
- The church is now God’s temple, a spiritual house of living stones.
- We reject reading these chapters as a future rebuilt physical sanctuary in an earthly kingdom.
- Christ reigns now at God’s right hand over His church, the house of God.

Discussion Prompts

- How does the temple, in all its parts, point forward to Christ and His church?
- Why is it wrong to read these chapters as a blueprint for a future rebuilt physical temple?
- What does it mean for your life that you are part of God’s true temple today?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking back across the building of God’s house, name one specific way the Lord is using this passage to shape you into a more devoted living stone in His spiritual house.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The capstone gathers the whole lesson and presses it into personal transformation. We have seen the holy ground, the costly devotion, the holiness of God, the strength found in Him, the call to purity, and the great fulfillment in Christ and His church.

The question now is not what students know but how they will change. To be a living stone is not a static title; it is a calling to be shaped, fitted, and joined to others in God's spiritual house.

The teacher should help each student move from the grandeur of the temple to one concrete commitment: a renewed reverence, a deeper trust, a confessed sin, a fresh resolve to give God their best.

Application: ask each person to name one specific way the Lord is using this passage to make them a more devoted part of His house, and to share or write it as a commitment.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Knowledge must move toward transformation.
- Being a living stone is a calling to be shaped and joined to others.
- The lesson aims at concrete, personal commitment.
- Christ is forming us through every truth in the passage.

Discussion Prompts

- What single truth from this lesson is the Lord pressing on your heart?
- How will you live differently as a living stone in God's house this week?
- What commitment can you name and keep before God?