

THE CELEBRATION OF PRAISE AND OF GOD'S GLORIOUS APPROVAL: A PICTURE OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING 2 CHRONICLES 05:11–14

Introduction

Covetousness is a consuming evil, a desire or passion that takes over our thoughts and that can even keep us awake at night. Left unchecked, covetousness can lead us into all forms of wickedness. Whether we covet wealth, property, sex, pornography, a larger house, a higher position or authority, power, someone else's possessions or any other thing upon this earth — the covetousness can eat away at us. It can so consume our thoughts and lives that we have no time for family or friends or for normal, productive and fruitful lives. Greed and materialism can warp our personalities and even our character, leading us to lie, steal and cheat. Often covetousness is the cause of terrible heartache, divorce, loss of employment, financial difficulties, lawless behaviour, assaults and even murder.

When an unhealthy spirit of greed arises within us, we must fight it. For if covetousness fills our thoughts and our lives, we leave no room for the LORD. And the LORD will not share our hearts and lives with anything else, especially with evil lusts. We either yield our lives to the LORD and His control or else we yield control to the evil lusts and passions. If we yield our lives to the LORD, He grants His presence and power within us. Covetousness and God's presence are the two subjects covered in the present Scripture.

After seven long years, the temple, along with its furnishings, was at last completed (1 Kng 6:33-38). Now the whole nation gathered for a great worship service to celebrate the dedication of the temple. All the leaders and as many citizens as could make the trip travelled to Jerusalem for the memorable service of dedication.

In reading this account, the returning exiles would be challenged to complete their task of reforming temple worship and rebuilding their nation. If they could reestablish true worship of the LORD in the temple, the LORD would grant His Presence just as He did to Solomon and the Israelites at this dedication service. If they completed their task just as Solomon completed his task, the LORD would be with them and bless their efforts to restore the temple and their nation. This is, *The Dedication of the Temple (Part 1)* — *Solomon's Placement of the Dedicated Gifts and the Ark in the Temple: Lessons on Guarding Against Covetousness and on God's Presence*, 2 Chronicles 5:1-14.

- I. The placement of the dedicated gifts in the temple: a lesson on guarding against covetousness (v. 1).
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- II. The placement of the Ark in the temple: a picture of God's presence among His people (vv. 2-10).
- III. The celebration of praise and of God's glorious approval: a picture of praise and thanksgiving (vv. 11-14).

2 Chronicles 5:11–14 The Celebration of Praise and of God's Glorious Approval: A Picture of Praise and Thanksgiving

There was an enormous celebration of praise as the priests brought the Ark into the temple. No sooner had they set it in the temple than God gave His stamp of approval. A phenomenal manifestation of His presence and glory filled the temple. Prior to this moment, the priests had sanctified and purified themselves in the cleansing rituals. And during the entire ceremony of moving the Ark into the temple, the musicians had performed (vv. 12-13). Standing on the east side of the altar, they were all dressed in white linen robes. A very large number were playing their musical instruments, and they were accompanied by 120 trumpeters. The fact that there were 120 trumpeters shows just how large both the instrumental and vocal section of the choir was. While the instruments played, the choir itself sang praises to the LORD, singing: "He is good; His mercy endures forever" (v. 13).

Immediately after the priest had completely withdrawn and the doors of the temple had been closed, a most wonderful event happened. The cloud of God's holy presence and His majestic glory filled the temple (v. 14). Just as God's majestic glory had covered Tabernacle at its dedication, so now the same phenomenal experience was given to God's people at the dedication of the temple (Exo 40:33-35). *First Kings* says that Solomon was stunned, overwhelmed by the spectacular event. Gripped with a deep sense of awe and reverence, he did his best to explain to the assembly what was happening. But he was unable. He simply declared that the LORD had said He would dwell in a dark cloud (1 Kng 8:10-13).

Note this fact: it was for this very purpose that Solomon had built the temple, to give God a place to manifest His presence forever. The people needed to know that God accepted their labour of love in building the temple as a testimony to His Name. Thus the LORD gave a public demonstration of His acceptance and approval. A brilliant white cloud filled the temple, a cloud that symbolized the presence and glory of the LORD. The cloud was obviously so radiant, shining with the brilliant splendour and light of God's glory, that the priests were unable to continue their service. God's glory was blazing forth with such great light that they had to withdraw from the temple (v. 14). Indeed, the LORD was demonstrating that He approved of the temple that He accepted the worship of Solomon and the Israelites.

Thought 1. Praise is due the LORD, for every good and perfect gift comes from God, and He never changes. He continues to pour out good and perfect gifts upon us and

upon this world. Whatever good there is, the good is due to God. He deserves to be praised. Think of His goodness to us, what He has given and done for us. He gives us...

- the life we live
- the air we breathe
- the water we drink
- the beauty of the earth we see
- the light we receive from the sun
- the stars of the sky and the heavenly bodies that fill the universe
- the food we eat
- the health we have
- the strength to bear the trials and temptations of this life
- the power to overcome and conquer whatever oppresses us
- the hope of salvation, of conquering even death itself and receiving eternal life
- the Saviour, the LORD Jesus Christ, who has made salvation possible

We could list innumerable good and perfect gifts God has provided for us. He deserves praise, honour and worship. As we walk throughout the day, we should be praising and thanking the LORD for His goodness to us. If it were not for His goodness, we would be left to ourselves, all on our own. There would be little restraint upon the lawlessness and violence of this earth. We must learn to *continually* praise and give thanks to the LORD. Listen to what God's Holy Word says:

Mat 5:16 *"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

Luke 24:51-53 *While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.*

John 15:8 *"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."*

Acts 2:46-47 *Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

Rom 15:5-6 *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus. So that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Cor 6:19-20 *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

Col 1:12 *Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.*

Col 3:15 *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

1 Th 5:18 *Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Heb 13:5 *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."*

1 Pet 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Deut 8:10 *When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you.*

Psa 9:11 *Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.*

Psa 22:23 *You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honour him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!*

Psa 35:28 *My tongue will speak of your righteousness and of your praises all day long. ■*