

# CHAPTER 5

The temple being built and furnished for God, we have here,

**I.** Possession given to him, by bringing in the dedicated things (v. 1), but especially the ark, the token of his presence (v. 2-10).

**II.** Possession taken by him, in a cloud (v. 11-14). For if any man open the door of his heart to God he will come in, ~~(418)~~ Revelation 3:20.

## ~~(418)~~ 2 CHRONICLES 5:1-10

### THE ARK PLACED IN THE TEMPLE

This agrees with what we had ~~(108)~~ 1 Kings 8:2, etc., where an account was given of the solemn introduction of the ark into the new-erected temple.

**1.** There needed no great solemnity for the bringing in of the dedicated things, v. 1. They added to the wealth, and perhaps were so disposed as to add to the beauty of it; but they could not add to the holiness, for it was the *temple that sanctified the gold*, ~~(427)~~ Matthew 23:17. See how just Solomon was both to God and to his father. Whatever David had dedicated to God, however much he might have liked it himself, he would by no means alienate it, but put it among the treasures of the temple. Those children that would inherit their godly parents' blessing must religiously pursue their pious intentions and not defeat them. When Solomon had made all the vessels of the temple in abundance (~~(448)~~ 2 Chronicles 4:18), many of the materials were left, which he would not convert to any other use, but laid up in the treasury for a time of need. Dedicated things must not be alienated. It is sacrilege to do it.

**2.** But it was fit that the ark should be brought in with great solemnity; and so it was. All the other vessels were made new, and larger, in proportion to the house, than they had been in the tabernacle. But the ark, with the mercy-seat and the cherubim, was the same; for the presence and the grace of God are the same in little assemblies that they are in large ones, in the poor condition of the church that they are in its prosperous estate. Wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name there is he as

truly present with them as if there were 2000 or 3000. The ark was brought in attended by a very great assembly of the elders of Israel, who came to grace and solemnity; and a very sumptuous appearance no doubt they made, v. 2-4. It was carried by the priests (v. 7), brought into the most holy place, and put under the wings of the great cherubim which Solomon had set up there, v. 7, 8. *There they are unto this day* (v. 9), not the day when this book was written after the captivity, but when that was written out of which this story was transcribed. Or they were there (so it might be read) unto this day, the day of Jerusalem's desolations, that fatal day, ~~1217~~ Psalm 137:7. The ark was a type of Christ, and, as such, a token of the presence of God. That gracious promise, *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*, does in effect bring the ark into our religious assemblies if we by faith and prayer put that promise in suit; and this we should be most solicitous and earnest for. *Lord, if thy presence go not up with us*, wherefore should we go up? The temple itself, if Christ leave it, is a desolate place, ~~1238~~ Matthew 23:38.

**3.** With the ark they brought up the tabernacle and all the *holy vessels that were in the tabernacle*, v. 5. Those were not alienated, because they had been dedicated to God, were not altered or melted down for the new work, though there was no need of them; but they were carefully laid up as monuments of antiquity, and probably as many of the vessels as were fit for use were still used.

**4.** This was done with great joy. They kept a holy feast upon the occasion (v. 3), and *sacrificed sheep and oxen without number*, v. 6. Note,

**(1.)** The establishment of the public worship of God according to his institution, and with the tokens of his presence, is, and ought to be, matter of great joy to any people.

**(2.)** When Christ is formed in a soul, the law written in the heart, the ark of the covenant settled there, so that it becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost, there is true satisfaction in that soul.

**(3.)** Whatever we have the comfort of we must, by the sacrifice of praise, give God the glory of, and not be straitened therein; *for with such sacrifices God is well pleased*. If God favour us with his presence, we must honour him with our services, the best we have.

## <451>2 CHRONICLES 5:11-14

### THE TEMPLE FILLED WITH GLORY

Solomon, and the elders of Israel, had done what they could to grace the solemnity of the introduction of the ark; but God, by testifying his acceptance of what they did, put the greatest honour upon it. The cloud of glory that filled the house beautified it more than all the gold with which it was overlaid or the precious stones with which it was garnished; and yet that was no glory in comparison with the glory of the gospel dispensation, <478>2 Corinthians 3:8-10. Observe,

**I.** How God took possession of the temple: He *filled it with a cloud*, v. 13.

**1.** Thus he signified his acceptance of this temple to be the same to him that the tabernacle of Moses was, and assured them that he would be the same in it; for it was by a cloud that he made his public entry into that, <484>Exodus 40:34.

**2.** Thus he considered the weakness and infirmity of those to whom he manifested himself, who could not bear the dazzling lustre of the divine light: it would have overpowered them; he therefore *spread his cloud upon it*, <489>Job 26:9. Christ revealed things unto his disciples as they were able to bear them, and in parables, which wrapped up divine things as in a cloud.

**3.** Thus he would affect all that worshipped in his courts with holy reverence and fear. Christ's disciples were afraid when they entered into a cloud, <494>Luke 9:34.

**4.** Thus he would intimate the darkness of that dispensation, by reason of which they could not stedfastly look to the end of those things which were now abolished, <499>2 Corinthians 3:13.

**II.** When he took possession of it.

**1.** *When the priests had come out of the holy place*, v. 11. This is the way of giving possession. All must come out, that the rightful owner may come in. Would we have God dwell in our hearts? We must leave room for him; let every thing else give way. We are here told that upon this occasion the whole family of the priests attended, and not any one particular course: *All*

*the priests that were present were sanctified* (v. 11), because there was work enough for them all, when such a multitude of sacrifices were to be offered, and because it was fit that they should all be eye-witnesses of this solemnity and receive the impressions of it.

**2.** When the singers and musicians praised God, then the house was filled with a cloud. This is very observable; it was not when they *offered sacrifices*, but when they *sang the praises of God*, that God gave them this token of his favour; for the sacrifice of praise *pleaseth the Lord* better than that of *an ox or bullock*, ~~1968~~ Psalm 69:31. All the singers and musicians were employed, those of all the three families; and, to complete the concert, 120 priests, with their trumpets, joined with them, all standing at the east end of the altar, on that side of the court which lay outmost towards the people, v. 12. And, when this part of the service began, the glory of God appeared. Observe,

**(1.)** It was when they were unanimous, when they were as one, to make one sound. The Holy God descended on the apostles when they met with one accord, ~~411~~ Acts 2:1-4. Where unity is the Lord commands the blessing.

**(2.)** It was when they were lively and hearty, and *lifted up their voice to praise the Lord*. Then we serve God acceptably when we are fervent in spirit serving him.

**(3.)** It was when they were, in their praises, celebrating the everlasting mercy and goodness of God. As there is one saying oftener repeated in scripture than this, *his mercy endureth for ever* (twenty-six times in one psalm, Psalm 136, and often elsewhere), so there is none more signally owned from heaven; for it was not the expression of some rapturous flights that the priests were singing when the glory of God appeared, but this plain song, *He is good, and his mercy endureth for ever*. God's goodness is his glory, and he is pleased when we give him the glory of it.

**III.** What was the effect of it. *The priests themselves could not stand to minister, by reason of the cloud* (v. 14), which, as it was an evidence that the law made men priests that had infirmity, so (as bishop Patrick observes) it was a plain intimation that the Levitical priesthood should cease, and stand no longer to minister, when the Messiah should come, in whom *the fulness of the godhead should dwell bodily*. In him the glory of God dwelt among us, but covered with a cloud. The Word was made flesh; and when

he comes to his temple, like a refiner's fire, *who may abide the day of his coming?* And *who shall stand when he appeareth?* ~~388~~ Malachi 3:1, 2.