

V

***<sup>9</sup> And they drew out the staves of the ark, that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day.***

~ We begin this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God with a remarkable statement in verse nine; one that most people skim past without a second thought. This section of Scripture is usually dismissed without so much as a second glance. Most so-called Christians never receive these deeply profound truths — because they cannot receive them; and the reason they cannot receive them is because they have never sincerely prayed for wisdom, judgment and discernment. They have never prayed for the Lord to lead them to a sincere, competent, educated Bible study — and then followed through with it. They don't make that prayer because they really are not interested in Him. See, if we don't ask God to reveal to us His truths of Scripture — and then make a proper, correct and complete effort to study the Bible — He won't. Don't kid yourself. That is the number one reason the Bible is absolutely meaningless to most people — they don't ask for His wisdom — so, they don't have it; and it is also why so many people are totally frustrated in their walk with God.

The staves are the “sticks” that were used to lift the Ark of the Lord so that the Ark itself was not touched by the Levites when Israel moved on the wilderness march. Here, they are removed from the tabernacle because the Ark will move no more. The Ark was constructed in the wilderness at Mount Sinai where the children of Israel spent forty long years. The Ark went before Israel and led Joshua across the Jordan River; and it has now been taken up to Jerusalem by David before his death. David placed it in a tent,

but now it has been brought to the newly built temple by Solomon. This is the place where God will be meeting with His people from now on.

The Ark wandered through the wilderness for many years; and had been moved from place to place ever since the children of Israel took possession of the Promised Land. In Samuel, the Philistines captured the Ark for a short time, but sent it away as fast as they possibly could. We previously saw it returned to Israel on the cart with golden mice and emerods in it. Then, we saw David make a failed attempt to bring the Ark to Jerusalem - because he handled it incorrectly - and ended up causing Uzzah to be smitten dead as a result. Well, now, we see it come to its final and permanent resting place, and the staves are removed for the final time.

We learned in Leviticus that the Ark speaks of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. On top of it was the mercy seat; which spoke of Who Christ is – our propitiation. It speaks of His shedding of Blood for remission of sins, and His work of redemption on the cross. From this time forward, it is mandatory all Israelite males come to Jerusalem three times per year – at three of the feasts – Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, to be specific – as the work of God was sealed and permeated for the nation at the time in which we are studying.

Today, Christ has appeared once in the end of the age to put away sin by sacrificing Himself. That is an eternal and basic tenet of permanent fact in Scripture. It is an establishment that cannot be moved. There will never be any other way of salvation throughout eternity, friends. Peter said, *“there is none other Name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.”* The staves being taken away also speaks of rest. The Lord Jesus gives rest to those who come to Him – but – there’s going to be a *PLACE* of rest. That place of rest is where Jesus told His disciples He was going when He said to them, *“I go to prepare a place for you.”* Well, Jesus went to prepare that place and He will return again to receive us unto Himself. That’s where eschatology begins for us.

That place is now being prepared and, one day, all saints will go there. One of its most striking and comforting characteristics is its permanence. It is eternal. There will no longer be tears or debt or strife or envy; those things will have passed away. What we will find is the throne of God Almighty. Jesus said it was finished because He is the Alpha and the Omega – of course, what we are talking about is Heaven. We will be in the city of God and the foundations thereof are permanent – forever; twelve foundations are what we will find – the twelve tribes of Israel. The Lord God and the Lamb are in the temple of it, too. Again, the staves have been pulled out. Israel will no longer be on the march. It's permanent now; and will never be changed or altered, even when the type is shifted to be in Heaven....

***<sup>10</sup> There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.***

~ So, the mice and the emerods the Philistines placed in the Ark are gone; but there's two other things missing, also: the rod of Aaron that budded and the pot of manna. Remember, manna would disappear if they didn't gather it; and Aaron's rod miraculously budded when the children of Israel criticized him for taking on too much of the leadership of the nation. The manna speaks of Christ as the Bread of Life; that means His humanity and how He feeds those who are His Own children. Aaron's rod speaks of the resurrection. Neither of those had occurred at this time in Israel's history, so those things weren't present. That has been actualized to us today by the historical fact Christ died and was buried – and that's human – but the resurrection isn't human, friends. This is a remarkable section of Scripture when we know and understand what we're reading....

***<sup>11</sup> And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place: (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course:***

***12 Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:)***

***13 It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD;***

***14 So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.***

## **VI**

***1 Then said Solomon, The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.***

***2 But I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever.***

***3 And the king turned his face, and blessed the whole congregation of Israel: and all the congregation of Israel stood.***

***4 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who hath with his hands fulfilled that which he spake with his mouth to my father David, saying,***

***5 Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build an house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel:***

***<sup>6</sup> But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.***

~ The message Solomon delivered at the dedication of the temple reveals his total trust and belief in the omnipotent and sovereign will of God. God Himself chose Jerusalem to be the center and capital of the earth. It was the capital at the time in which we are studying, and it will be that again when Christ returns to rule and reign. God also Personally chose the *location within* Jerusalem for the temple to be built. Further, God chose David to be the king of Israel and Solomon to succeed David – as we have already seen very definitely. This is the arbitrary and absolute will of God being executed in this section of Scripture.

Personally, I would not have selected Jerusalem as the location for the temple. The most beautiful spot in Israel is where old man Ahab and Jezebel lived. Many people build on a hillside looking down on a valley – but they rarely look every direction; as did the palace Omri built for Ahab. From that spot in Samaria, you can see every direction clearly. To the west is the Mediterranean Sea; to the east is the Jordan Valley and the Sea of Galilee; to the south Jerusalem can be seen; and, to the north, Mount Herman. It's quite a view, to be sure. That's where I would have chosen. Well, since God never asked me my opinion, I have to understand this is the sovereign will of God. We really need to recognize and accept His will; and we need to learn to do so in all things.

God also has a will for you and me today. If you are a child of God, He has a place for you to live. He has a particular house in a particular town in a particular state or country. The biggest problem is for you and me to actually get into the will of God. We can stand off and argue "*free will*" against "*election*" and the sovereign grace of God all day long – and I promise you we won't get *ANYWHERE*. It is a fruitless discussion to have. What is fruitful is to determine the place where "x" marks the spot of God's will for our lives; and get there and, my friends, you can *NEVER – NEVER –*

*NEVER* know that place outside of the Word of God. When we do get on that spot, we're going to know we're in the right place. That is so extremely important to understand I cannot emphasize it enough. God chose everything we're studying here: David – Solomon - Jerusalem – *ALL* of it....

***<sup>7</sup> Now it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.***

***<sup>8</sup> But the LORD said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build an house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart:***

***<sup>9</sup> Notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house; but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name.***

***<sup>10</sup> The LORD therefore hath performed his word that he hath spoken: for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and am set on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.***

***<sup>11</sup> And in it have I put the ark, wherein is the covenant of the LORD, that he made with the children of Israel.***

***<sup>12</sup> And he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands:***

***<sup>13</sup> For Solomon had made a brasen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven,***

***<sup>14</sup> And said, O LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keepest covenant, and shewest mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts:***

***15 Thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him; and spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.***

***16 Now therefore, O LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel; yet so that thy children take heed to their way to walk in my law, as thou hast walked before me.***

***17 Now then, O LORD God of Israel, let thy word be verified, which thou hast spoken unto thy servant David.***

***18 But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!***

***19 Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee:***

~ If you want a Biblically correct posture for prayer, verse thirteen is the answer. This prayer encompasses the experience most Christians need to have with God. Instead of stiff-arming Him with a flippant proclamation of belief, why not come to Him directly and definitely in a *REAL* relationship today? Solomon is thanking God for material things; and Solomon had more material things than any other man on earth. The gold was in such abundance that it was as commonplace as picking up pebbles on the seashore. Solomon never looked at the price tag for anything; and the word “*economy*” wasn’t part of his vernacular.

The average American has more material stuff than anyone has had at any point in history before. We have more comfort, more gadgets and devices with more buttons to push that show things on screens; and we label it all

functional and utilitarian. Solomon never had air conditioning, or central heating; they didn't have the computer, telephone, refrigerators or electric cooking. If Solomon wanted iced tea in summer he had to send men to the top of Mount Herman to bring back frozen snow – but they didn't drive up there. They could have fresh meat, but they couldn't store it very long. Even so, this is a great prayer uttered in thanksgiving to God acknowledging His provision in everything they had. How many of us actually thank God for the provision He makes for us? How many of us thank God for the spiritual things and opportunities for fellowship we have that we could never have had just a few short decades ago? Well, the whole world got the message from Solomon — without television, radio, internet or telephone....

***<sup>20</sup> That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place.***

***<sup>21</sup> Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.***

***<sup>22</sup> If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house;***

***<sup>23</sup> Then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness.***

***<sup>24</sup> And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house;***

***<sup>25</sup> Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers.***

***26 When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; yet if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them;***

***27 Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou hast taught them the good way, wherein they should walk; and send rain upon thy land, which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance.***

***28 If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillers; if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be:***

***29 Then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house:***

***30 Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:)***

***31 That they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.***

***32 Moreover concerning the stranger, which is not of thy people Israel, but is come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy stretched out arm; if they come and pray in this house;***

***33 Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as doth thy people Israel, and may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name.***

***34 If thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name;***

***35 Then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.***

***36 If they sin against thee, (for there is no man which sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near;***

***37 Yet if they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly;***

***38 If they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name:***

***39 Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee.***

***40 Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.***

***41 Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.***

***42 O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant.***

~ I hope you read Solomon's prayer carefully and completely. The temple would become the center of worship for the entire world. This was a great missionary project – in reverse! The temple was not just for Israel. Whatever problems were going on in the world were to be brought to the temple where they were to come to the Lord in prayer. God knows us, friends – He knows our hearts; now, He wants you to know *HIS* heart! We ought to be doing business with God a little more sincerely than I see it done in the modern church.

Verse thirty-six should be a wake-up call for those who believe they never sin after they become saved. This all speaks of being carried away captive *AFTER* they have known the Lord. This also speaks to the fact that God never let's us go – we never lose salvation. Anyone you think may have lost their salvation was never saved in the first place: you can just write that down. All they had to do was lift up their voices to God and turn back towards the temple. Even after the temple was destroyed, we find Daniel turning in the direction of Jerusalem in prayer. I cannot make it any more clear than verse thirty-nine. We're talking about His people who had sinned. God isn't going to let you go, friends; although you may get very far away from Him. Let's get clothed in salvation as it says in verse forty-one.

This is a glorious prayer that was made based on the mercies of the Lord that endureth forever – and which were extended to King David. Today, we don't pray for mercy, but for the *Mercy Seat* that Christ has provided for us through His death, burial and resurrection. We can only come to the Lord Jesus Christ through the Blood He shed and sprinkled on the mercy seat. Peace and mercy are available in Christ, friends. So, we end this leg of our Spiritual Safari with the conclusion of the prayer of Solomon.

As we move forward in our expedition, we'll see the glory of the Lord fill the house of the temple. Although the temple was much inferior to the tabernacle, God, in His mercy, accepts it and blesses His people. While you meditate on Solomon's prayer, think about your own prayer life. Most

people do not make prayer the high priority it should be. I think most people struggle to pray each day. Why not go – right now – and pray that Jesus will teach you to pray; and that He will deepen your relationship with Him and make your walk in this world actually mean something for Him in His plan and purpose today? ~

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In the Thick Darkness >>>  
<<< 2 Chronicles 5:9 – 6:42