

15th January 2012, Evening Service – 2 Chronicles 2

“The temple I am going to build will be great, because our God is greater than all other gods. But who is able to build a temple for him, since the heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain him? Who then am I to build a temple for him, except as a place to burn sacrifices before him?” *2 Chron 2:5-6*

In the second of the series of talks on 2 Chronicles, Kenneth our minister, led us to consider Solomon’s preparations for the building of the temple. It was clear at this stage that Solomon’s intention, his purpose in undertaking this project was to honour God. The people are focused on God because they are the people of God.

Solomon’s detailed preparations involved negotiations with Hiram king of Tyre to provide raw materials and craftsmen’s expertise for the task and contracts were agreed - without access to credit facilities!

It is interesting to draw parallels between these endeavours of Israel during this, its most economically prosperous era and those of the wealthy merchants and captains of industry in Victorian Scotland who undertook an ambitious and extensive programme of building places of worship. Some of these numerous and often extravagant buildings may have been erected partly as status enhancers for some of their benefactors, but what is also certain is that there was, during this era, **a pressing need for places of worship**. The Victorian era in Scotland was a period of religious revival when the people could, with justification, be called people of the Book. How times have changed!

Like the Israelites, who in time came to focus more on the temple itself than on the God whom it was intended to honour, many people in Scottish churches have developed a distorted view of the importance of buildings and have neglected the purpose for which they were built. This distortion can be seen in how Church funds across the land are more frequently channelled towards the upkeep and maintenance of buildings rather than towards more spiritually worthy evangelistic purposes. We would do well to remember that, through Christ, God has shown that he is not impressed by magnificent buildings and thrones of gold. His desire is to reign in our hearts.

In the next year or two the people of Scotland will be asked to decide whether or not to remain members of the United Kingdom or whether to opt for political independence. Whatever our political views let us pray that Scotland’s identity, whether inside or separate from the UK, is characterised by dependence on God with its actions defined by a desire to honour God.

Sunday 8th January 2012

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.” So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene. Matthew 19-23

This morning’s sermon was a reminder that, for most of his life, Jesus lived in a village – Nazareth. Those of us who live in villages like Bridge of Weir have as much responsibility to undertake the Great Commission as people who reside in the bigger, more ‘glamorous’ and seemingly better resourced cities of the land.

We must not make excuses that we are ‘too small’ a church in ‘too insignificant’ a place to make any impact in terms of bringing others to Christ. Thankfully, we can rely on God to equip us for any task he needs us to undertake in his name and his Holy Spirit is available to us as our helper in every situation.

So, rather than feeling frustrated by the apparent limits of our geography, we should be encouraged that **God's Son chose a village** and not a metropolitan palace to grow to manhood and prepare for ministry when he walked the earth.