**BUILDING A TEMPLE**  ***MM online***

**I want to ask you ten questions today, but, first, listen to this reading:**

**1 Chr. 29:1-9**

**So, *QUESTION #1 What’s better – a tent or a house?***

**Now, as some of you know, Dawn and I love camping, but we wouldn’t want to *live* in a tent! It’s all about timing, you see – camping’s great in September, but not so good in January (unless you’re in Australia)!**

**So, *QUESTION #2 Where does God prefer to live?***

**The Israelites didn’t know God as modern Christians do. To us, Jesus is *Immanuel – God with us (Mt. 1:23) –* but Jesus hadn’t yet come in the days of David. God *was* with them, but they needed a sort of “home” for Him, a physical reminder that He was with them. About four or five hundred years before David, Moses had instructed them to make a tent for Him (Ex. 26).**

**Which leads me to *QUESTION #3 Why did Moses tell them to make a tent?***

**It wasn’t Moses’ bright idea – it was God’s! The instructions for making the tabernacle (that’s the name of the holy tent) cover eight chapters in Exodus (24-31) and they include the furnishings and even the clothes of the priests who would serve there, and all those instructions came from God Himself and Moses carefully wrote them down (Ex. 24:4, 25:9). But why a tent? Because God knew that the Israelites would be spending forty years wandering in the wilderness and would then need to invade and settle the Promised Land and the great utility of a tent, of course, is its portability, even a BIG tent like the tabernacle (which was about 45’x15’).**

**But, now, half a millennium later, the Israelites have established a kingdom and, guided by God, David has made Jerusalem its capital (2 Chron. 6:5-6). I started off by saying that camping is all about *timing –* there’s a time to erect your tent and a time to strike camp. When we reach 1 Chronicles 29, the time had come to retire the tabernacle – God’s tent - and to build a temple for Him. Now, of course, God needed neither tabernacle nor temple, because, as Stephen said, *the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands* *(Ac. 7:48),* but it was the right *time* to build Him a temple and God confirmed that to Nathan the prophet, although He stressed that *Solomon* would be the one to build it (1 Chr. 17:12) as David said in v. 1.**

**But, temples are expensive, so, *QUESTION #4* *Who’s going to pay for it?***

**Well, that’s easy – David! He’s the king and he’s rich and, as we read, he’s generous. As he said, *in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God (v. 3).***

**So, *QUESTION #5 Was it enough?***

**No it wasn’t, and, even if it *were* enough, it wouldn’t *be* enough because it would then be *David’s* temple, not *God’s* temple.**

**So, *QUESTION #6 Where’s the rest of the money coming from?***

**Well, just as Moses expected the Israelites to pay for the tabernacle (Ex. 25:1-9), so David expected them (as well as himself) to pay for the temple. Oh, yeah - taxes going up! Same old, same old. What does it say? “And, lo! David ordered his tax collectors to collect 25% of gross income from all the people and if they paid not they were cast into the dungeon where there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth and, verily, even if they *did* pay there was much wailing and gnashing of teeth anyway!”**

**No, that’s not what it says! So, *QUESTION #7 What did David actually say?***

**We read it - *Verse 5: Who then is willing….*WILLING: because then, as now, as Paul said in 2 Corinthians 9:7, *God loves a cheerful giver.***

***QUESTION #8 How much did they give?***

**170 tons of gold, 340 tons of silver, 610 tons of bronze and 3,400 tons of iron according to vv. 7-8.**

**And *QUESTION #9 How miserable were they after all that expensive giving?***

**Look at v. 9: *The people rejoiced….*and *David the king also rejoiced greatly.***

**Which, of course, brings me to the obvious question, *QUESTION #10 Why am I telling you all this?***

**Next time you visit Manor Mission Church, pause before you go in and have a look at our dearly-loved building. Then have a look round about. We are surrounded by a building site! When it’s all finished, everything around us will be brand-new and our church will look, at best, quaint and, at worst, obsolete. We’ll do our best with what we’ve got, but, to the community, the unspoken message will be that the Church and its gospel is old-fashioned and out-of-date. And, so, we feel that God wants us to EXPAND and modernise and our current building is just too small and primitive for those godly ambitions.**

**Hence our plans to rebuild. Even though we don’t anticipate using gold, silver and bronze, you will, of course, be asked to contribute practically, prayerfully and financially. *[SIGH] How much do you want from me?***

**I don’t know! Rewind and listen again - *God loves a cheerful giver*! As we’ll hear next time (in a fortnight – no message from me next week) when we look at the prayer David prayed next, he said to God, *you test the heart and are pleased with integrity (v. 17).* Give as much as puts and keeps a smile on your face!**

**So, hard hats on, there’s work to be done! But builders often use kneeling pads, too, and, without prayer, not a brick will be laid. After all, without prayer in 1926, there would never have been a Manor Mission for us to rebuild! But more about prayer next time….**