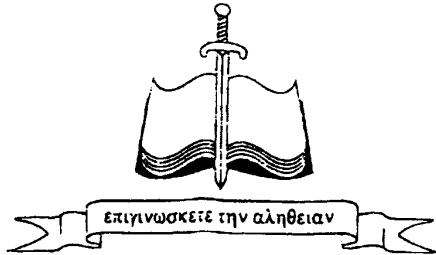


EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE LIFE OF SOLOMON

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1 KINGS CHAPTER 1**INTRODUCTION**

The writer of the books now named 1 and 2 Samuel may be the one who continues the account here, for it flows directly on from our last chapter of 2 Samuel. It may also be that a later editor (either Jeremiah, Ezekiel, or Ezra) wove the books thoroughly together from earlier manuscripts. In 1 Chronicles 29:29-30, we are told of at least three separate books that were extant at the time of writing Chronicles, and my suspicion is that the writer of the books that we call "Kings" here before us, has referred to them all.

My focus is upon the leadership principles that emerge from the actual story here, rather than the scholarly debate on authorship. The main reason for the avoidance of this debate is that we cannot answer it with any certainty at all, so I will leave the comments above as our introduction. The author hurries straight on in the text to discuss the events that precede the death of David without any words of introduction, so let's follow him in this and get straight into the story.

Chapter 24 of 2 Samuel ended with David in good health and confronting the error of judgement he made in the census. Several years may pass between this year and the last months that are covered in chapter one of 1 Kings before us. Nothing of national or international political significance occurs through this time that our writer believes is note worthy, although the author of the priestly history in Chronicles fills this time frame with David's preparation for the building of the Temple. Remember, the difference between the parallel histories of Kings and Chronicles is that Kings records the political-courtly history, and Chronicles the Priestly/Theological perspective on the same events.

David had already been told that he was not to build the Temple, but his son (yet unborn at the time the Lord tells him this) would do this, (2 Samuel 7), and so he has been quietly gathering the required material throughout his reign. After the purchase of the land for the Temple from Araunah (2 Samuel 24), he really makes this the priority of his last years. The gathering and setting aside of vast quantities of material adjacent to the actual site is David's main concern in the closing years of his reign.

Many people shift their emphasis in life as they near life's journey end. This is a normal process of the moving of priorities as we draw near the close of our brief time on earth. With health and vigour, the years of life appear to be stretching out before us in a vast unbroken expanse, but once we have begun to experience the limits that age and health crises bring, we change our focus. This is called by some, the "existential crisis of aging", by others today, "the Mid-Life Crisis".

For David his true "Mid-life Crisis" occurs after the Great Rebellion of Absalom, and the other one close afterwards of Sheba. His fall into sin with Bathsheba is not a "crisis", but an evil and sinful time, and let us record all people's sinful falls as such, and not minimize them by using the word "crisis". After the Great Rebellion David realises that his years are short now and he must get the kingdom ready for his successor, who he knows is to be Solomon, not the surviving oldest son, Adonijah, or any others born at either Hebron or Jerusalem. 2 Samuel 3:2-5, 7:12, 1 Chronicles 22:9-10, 28:5.

Turn to 1 Chronicles 22 and let us read through that chapter, and skim through the others there, and see the vast quantities of material that David will gather and set aside for the building of the Temple. Read Verses 1 – 5 of the chapter 22. Notice that the writer of Chronicles identifies that the work of making the stones for the Temple began with masons working well before David's death. This great building project was "kit set" made off site for years before construction on site began. Pagan pharaoh's did this to glorify themselves and provide for their death rituals, but David poured his energy and funds into leaving a legacy that spoke of the nation's spiritual life, not his death.

Vast quantities of hewn stones were stockpiled, with iron and precious metals, and the cedar timbers, which were worked into the right sizes and shapes for the support beams and panelling. David is the one who has the plans for the Temple prepared and he begins the work of preparation for the giant kit-set that Solomon will assemble later, without the sound of a hammer being heard on the work site. Solomon will also have to gather more material for the surrounding buildings and walls and that will take another four more years before the assembly of the structure commences. 2 Chronicles 3:2.

In verses 6 – 13 of 1 Chronicles 22 David charges Solomon with the building of the Temple, and in the process he passes over to him the plans for the Temple and the stock take totals of the stock piles of material set aside for its building. From these and subsequent verses here it appears to me that David had set the project up with a master builder in charge, so that the noisy preparation was all done off site and the material stored adjacent to the areas it would be assembled.

The project manager had the task of readying the material but not assembling anything, for the Lord had made it clear that this was Solomon's job. He is still quite young at the time David really starts preparation for the building, and old David will still refer to him as "tender" in age (he is around twenty) when he passes the kingdom to him. 1 Chronicles 29:1. David will ask the elders to support Solomon in his work in the early days of his reign, but by his prayer for his son he has set up Solomon's own prayer for his rulership. Solomon does not pray for great wealth, but for the wisdom to serve the Lord and achieve all that is required to complete the work his father David began. 1 Chronicles 22:11-13, 28:20-21, 2 Chronicles 1:7-12.

Solomon may be around ten-fourteen when they return after the rebellion of Absalom, and he will be around twenty when he ascends the throne, so we have the approximate time frame for the gathering of the material of between six and ten years. In verses 14 – 16 the writer lists some of the quantities of material, and it is significant. He lists this again in 1 Chronicles chapter 28, verses 11 – 19. We are also told that the entire work force for the building is on site as part of the preparation and is “ready to go” and build the structure. David passes the plans in total to Solomon, 1 Chronicles 28:11-13.

David will then call upon all the elders of all the tribes and invite them to participate in the temple building project by a free will offering, exactly as Moses had invited gifts for the tabernacle, and more will be given to the work as a further free will praise offering. 1 Chronicles 29:1-9. The wealth of David’s kingdom will be put into this building, and it will be a wonder of the ancient world for 419 years. The Temple was the centre of Israel’s worship for over four hundred years, but sadly it will become the centre of apostasy and paganism by the end and will be totally destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Some of its ruins and remains have been uncovered by the illegal diggings on the Temple Mount ordered in recent years by the Moslem authorities who control the area. Refer to the Biblical Archaeological Review website (“Temple Mount Sifting Project”) for details of these finds.

1 KINGS 1:1-53

1 Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. **2** Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat.**3** So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. **4** And the damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not. **5** Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. **6** And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom. **7** And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him. **8** But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged to David, were not with Adonijah. **9** And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by Enrogel, and called all his brethren the king’s sons, and all the men of Judah the king’s servants: **10** But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not. **11** Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not? **12** Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon. **13** Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign? **14** Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words. **15** And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king. **16** And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldest thou? **17** And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. **18** And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it not: **19** And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called. **20** And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. **21** Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders. **22** And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. **23** And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. **24** And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? **25** For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king’s sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah. **26** But me, even me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called. **27** Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed it unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him? **28** Then king David answered and said, Call me Bathsheba. And she came into the king’s presence, and stood before the king. **29** And the king sware, and said, As the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, **30** Even as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day. **31** Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever. **32** And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. **33** The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: **34** And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. **35** Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. **36** And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king say so too. **37** As the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David. **38** So Zadok the priest, and Nathan

the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. 39 And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon. 40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them. 41 And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar? 42 And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came; and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings. 43 And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king. 44 And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule: 45 And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This is the noise that ye have heard. 46 And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom. 47 And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed. 48 And also thus said the king, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it. 49 And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way. 50 And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. 51 And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me today that he will not slay his servant with the sword. 52 And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. 53 So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 4. David is suffering from what we can diagnose at this distance quite easily as some form of heart failure. This progressive heart failure leads to the inability of the heart to pump the blood to the extremities of the body, and so the body feels chilled all the time, and no matter how many blankets are applied the patient feels cold. The later Greek Medical writer Galen will prescribe exactly what the Hebrew doctors prescribe for David. (Galen – Methodia Medica Book 8-7). A young person was assigned to the older person to lie closely to them, to have the energy and physical warmth of youth warm the body of the older person.

This remains the recommended technique to bring back warmth to the body of a person suffering from exposure (hyperthermia), where their body temperature has dropped to dangerous levels. A series of warm and fit young people are placed in a sleeping bag on either side of the chilled person, and they stay there for five to ten minutes each, in rotation, so that heat may be safely brought back to the chilled person, and the fit young people may not lose too much body heat themselves. In the Navy it was called "the sailor sandwich", and it saved lives.

A "beauty contest" is held throughout the land and the girl who is chosen for this task is the most beautiful in the land. She is Abishag the Shunamite; Abishag from Shunem. The central character of Solomon's later poem on the subject of love and love lost will be the Shulamite woman, perhaps drawn from this most beautiful woman of them all, although her name is a pet name, a play on the word for Solomon's own name. She is the one bringing peace to the heart of the king, and Abishag brings warmth to the heart of the king, but she cannot stop the dying process, nor heal that which is made to fail within us all. There is a time to die for us all and it is David's time at around seventy years of age. 2 Samuel 5:3-5, 1 Kings 2:10-11, 1 Chronicles 29:26-30.

David's state of ill health is shown by his not feeling any sexual desire at all for Abishag, although she has technically become a concubine or wife of the king by this service. This fact will be central after David's death and will lead to the execution of Adonijah, for from the day she enters the king's bedroom she is seen as the wife of the king, and the only man who may lie with her thereafter is the new king. This is a reminder to us, that in God's eyes, any sexual contact binds a couple together in his sight and is either adultery or marriage. Adultery is to be confessed and fled from, and marriage is to be honoured. 1 Corinthians 6:15-18.

Verses 5 – 8. The key words used by the writer in this first verse are to be noted; they are the words "exulted himself". The principle of God's Word from one end to the other, is that the Lord lifts up and magnifies a man, and he is most unwise if he lifts himself up. 1 Peter 5:5-9. While David is still alive, but failing, this son of his from Hebron, decides the time has come to take over. This is exactly what Absalom did when he raised the Great Rebellion; decide that his father was "past it", and gathered the strength around him to raise the rebellion. 2 Samuel 15.

The writer's words here are as sad as they were regarding David's dealing with Absalom; he has fallen short of the standards the Lord required of him as a father, but the fatal fault is finally with this man Adonijah. In our modern parenting philosophies it is however all too easy to say that David has failed 100% as a father; he has not guided his sons and spent the time with them that they needed. This is simply not true in this case, or in the case of Absalom. David has failed and fallen short, but not to the level some modern commentators argue. We must remember the ages of both men when they fall into their great sins of arrogance and rebellion against their father. Both men are mature, at least in their late twenties or mid thirties. They are at least fifteen years past the age when parental guidance is a relevant consideration at all.

The danger of polygamy may have also come home to haunt David in his dealings with his sons, for he may not have had the time to deal with his growing brood when they were younger, and also pay attention to affairs of State. While this is all possibly true, and he is judged for not giving more active on-going guidance to his sons, we mustn't be too hasty in our application of the modern standards relating to a father's involvement with all his sons, for that was not expected in the ancient world, nor needed in the two cases before us, given their ages. Let us understand the nature of parenting as it was in this day.

David has, we discover from Chronicles, spent time with Solomon, for he sees in this young man the one the Lord has selected. This man Adonijah, who is now at least 35 years old, has not got what it takes, but believes he has, like all narcissists. David's attitude and behaviour as a father was the common one for rulers through all the centuries of man's history until the most recent one. Right up until the twentieth century most noble fathers would not spend a great deal of time with their children until the children had matured to the point where their character was fully formed, and they could judge what they would be best to do with their lives.

Children were brought up by nannies and trusted and well trained slaves, whose job was to teach them all they needed to be mature and active members of the royal family and nation. Paul refers to this many centuries later, noting that the "school-master" or pedagogue, was the instructor until children were of mature age. Galatians 3:24-25. So in the ancient world a father had little to do with his son until the "pedagogue" had done his work over the maturing years.

If at the point of maturity (around 20 years of age) a child did not really measure up and show signs of being a great ruler, then the father literally ignored that son from that point onwards, for he was of no value to the family's survival, and another was selected/adopted to take over the family fortune after the leader's death. That is what has happened here, 1 Timothy 3:1-13. Adonijah does not have either the character qualities, or the rulership ability, David recognises that, and so David spends no time with him at all from that point onwards and spends any time he has with Solomon. Adonijah, like most of the others, has been side lined, and he decides to try to get back to the mainstream and seize the power that his father has foreseen he hasn't the ability to hold. He doesn't seek God's path for him, as Nathan will.

He "exults himself" and decides on a plan to become the king and take over behind the scenes without David being aware of it, so that when David slips away in death, Adonijah is already acknowledged as sole ruler. He has calculated that David is truly demented and does not know what is going on and will die within hours or days. He hires fifty men as his "rent a crowd" so he looks the part, secures the royal chariots, and drives around as if he is king. Acting like a king and making deals like a king does not mean you are a king, and sadly this man is no more or less than his brother Absalom was. Sadly he also is a Narcissist, who over estimates his own ability and dignity. He is a party animal and thinks that throwing a feast makes him king, whereas what is really required is his father's blessing, and his father's troops, and they will not follow a man who lacks "power of command".

The key men in the kingdom stick close by David and reject Adonijah's claim to fame, for they know he hasn't the ability to sustain his bid, but many of the elders of the tribe of Judah support Adonijah, as they supported Absalom. Some people never learn! The elders of Judah may fear that the new king will judge them for siding with Absalom and so they want to be seen siding with the winning candidate early this time; but how wrong they are, for they think as carnal men! 1 Corinthians 2:14 – 3:3. Sadly the majority will nearly always "think as men", and this remains the major challenge of leadership. As the Lord's leaders we will spend much of our time trying to get God's foolish sheep to hear and believe the Word of Truth and so move away from error.

The key men who cling to Adonijah are men who know their days of power are limited. These men are Joab and Abiathar the priest at Jerusalem. Joab is in grave danger under the new king, for he has escaped execution for the murders of Abner and Amasa only because he was needed by David at those times, but with David dying the families of the dead can request justice of the new king and he has no ability to withstand a Levitical inquiry into those unjustified murders.

Abiathar joined David after the murder of the priests at Nob, 1 Samuel 22:20-23. He has faithfully served David and been the High Priest who guarded the Ark after David brought it to Jerusalem. He has walked with David for over forty years, but he has lost ground to the younger High Priest Zadok over recent years, and when the Temple is built, the younger man is clearly going to get the job of single High Priest. The two national shrines, at Gibeah and Jerusalem, are an anomaly, and when it is corrected with the single Temple, this man knows he will be out of a job. It shouldn't worry him!

Now the key doctrinal principle here is that expressed by John the Baptist many years after this time. John 3:23-30. There is always a time in every ministry when the senior pastor steps aside for the younger man appointed by the Lord to take the reins and lead the people into a new period of God's grace anointing. Abiathar has served well and he is now in his sixties at least, and it is time for him to head away and let the Lord lift up Zadok to take full control. He however clings to power and status for the same reasons as Adonijah seeks them; both are self centred, rather than seeking what God is doing and how they may play the part God has for them. He will lose his power, but not his life, whereas Joab will lose both.

The key military men and their troops stand by David until the end, while foolish Adonijah is feasting with a general who has no troops. He has one of the High Priests with him, but the key High Priest, and the rest of the priesthood, and the prophet Nathan, stand by the ill and dying David. They seek the real king's will, and are not swayed by the petty political posturing of Adonijah, for they know, that facing the real threats the kingdom faces requires strong and noble leadership.

The key members of David's cabinet are standing by his bed to seek instructions from him alone. They do not consider Adonijah worthy of anything except censure. It is better to have the counsel of a godly dying man than the foolishness of a fit, handsome, but ineffectual politician. Seek the company of godly men and women believers, for in their counsel only is wisdom. Seek the company of those who search for God's will alone in all situations, and have no concerns for them selves.

Verses 9 – 10. Adonijah is determined to have a really significant feast. He gathers by invitation the people he seeks to be a part of his government and pointedly leaves out invitations to the men who he believes are waiting for David's will to be clear, and would not support him anyway. Foolishly he does not even work out that without a prophet, and the army, he has nothing to depend upon, either from God, or from men.

He has also called all the sons of David except Solomon, and that makes it clear that he knows Solomon is the choice of David and he is trying to undermine what he already knows is his father's and God's will. This man is deserving of execution for this alone. In grace and mercy he will be delivered from death at this point, but his persistence in plotting will lead to his death. Like most of Satan's arrogant crew he is pathetic, from start to finish.

Verses 11 – 14. Nathan was the prophet who was called by the Lord to convince the king of his adultery with Bathsheba. 2 Samuel 12. He not only announced the judgement of God upon David, but signals the beginning of the time of discipline upon him through the sickness and death of the child born of adultery. He has clearly by this time not only accepted Bathsheba as the senior Queen, but also as the future king's mother. Nathan walks with God and has seen that David and Bathsheba's repentance has opened up the door of blessing upon them and their next son, and that Solomon is to be the king after David.

Nathan was the prophet who brought David the prophecy that the son who would rule after him was yet to be born when he planned first to build the Temple. 2 Samuel 7:12-17. He recognises this son as Solomon, and no matter what he may have previously thought of Bathsheba's behaviours, he has accepted her before the Lord, and seeks for her action to ensure that David's will is not undermined by Adonijah. Clearly Bathsheba is used to working with Nathan also, and this is testimony to the reconciliation that has occurred in the palace after the death of Uriah and the repentance of David and Bathsheba. 1 Thessalonians 5:13. It indicates that she is a believer now, although she still isn't discerning, as we will see with Adonijah later below.

Nathan sees that the purpose of Adonijah will lead to her death and the death of Solomon, for they must be removed for Adonijah to rule securely. The other sons of David are party to all this, for they eat with their brother when they know what his actions mean. They are as foolish here as they were in accepting the invitation of Absalom to eat at his sheep shearing festival! 2 Samuel 13:23ff. These boys prove why David must overlook them in the rulership, for they do not have the brains, character, or the moral strength to decide what is right, let alone exercise any true rulership at this point. 1 Timothy 3:10.

Nathan briefs Bathsheba on what she is to say when she enters the king's presence. He will then follow this up by entering after her and raising the same issue. 2 Corinthians 13:1. There must be at least two solid eye witnesses to any event for it to be confirmed. David has not been told of the actions of Adonijah, for all in the court fear what the news will do to the dying king, so it is quite right for the prophet who brought the prophetic word regarding Solomon to take the action he does here. He must take the lead action, for he has the Lord's seal upon him relating to Solomon's role, and the others must await orders and be ready to follow up on what he does. He knows the will of the Lord and so he spends all his energy to do what is required to ensure the right thing happens. Let us be so focused upon **our own work**.

Verses 15 – 21. When Bathsheba enters David's bed chamber he is being ministered to by his nurse Abishag. The writer notes that he is "very old", but he is only late sixties or very early seventies in our terms, but he has had a hard life, and the ravages of heart disease have given him the appearance of a man much older. He recognises Bathsheba but is unable to raise himself from his bed, a sign that he lives only as long as he doesn't strain his heart. He immediately asks Bathsheba what she wants, and does so in such a way that indicates that he is ready to do anything she requires. It is another reminder that David has not had a long and happy life with Bathsheba after their affair, and that his adultery, while forgiven, has not opened the door to marital happiness and any lasting loving fellowship for them. Adultery never does bring the contentment that it deceptively promises.

She reminds David of his promise to her regarding Solomon and claims this now. They will not at any point in this discussion be alone in the bedchamber, for in ancient days the entire court would be there or in the next room, all awaiting the king's pleasure. Bathsheba's words will be backed by all present, but the key man to back them is Nathan the prophet and he soon enters the room as pre-arranged. 1 Chronicles 22:6-13. Bathsheba reports the actions of Adonijah, and the fact that all the sons except Solomon have been called to the feast, and that he has proclaimed himself to be king, and there is recognition of this by those at the feast, and that there is confusion in the city about whether David has authorised this or not.

Solomon has pointedly not been called to the feast, and the intentions of Adonijah are publically clear now towards him. As far as the people know David is behind this, and only his word will stop that impression growing in force as the hours tick by. It is essential that an action occur, and that it occur quickly, publically, and dramatically or the imposter will gain power and rebellion will have to be confronted. Bathsheba is quite correct in her assessment, that if the king does not speak now, and dies without firmly establishing Solomon as king, then all that he has feared will come to pass and chaos will reign, and she and her son will be executed as dangers to State security.

Verses 22 – 31. Bathsheba is still speaking when Nathan the prophet comes into the bedchamber. He directly asks David whether he has appointed Adonijah to rule after him. Nathan identifies that Adonijah had invited the “captains of the host”, even though only Joab is there. He also notes that the people are crying aloud, “long live king Adonijah”. He then notes that the specific people not called to the self coronation are himself, Benaiah, Solomon, and Zadok. He then asks again whether David has given secret orders without telling these men of his plans.

Bathsheba must have bowed out of the audience room into the ante-chamber when Nathan begins to speak, for she has to be called back to the place where David can see her again. David formally swears to Bathsheba and to all present that as the Lord has rescued him from all previous distress, just so he is now rescued again by the words of the prophet Nathan. He affirms that Solomon is to sit upon his throne and rule after him and that he will take action this very day to ensure all know of it. Psalms 34:16-22, 72:14, 136:24, 138:6-8.

Verses 32 – 40. David is suffering from heart disease and his body is weak, but his mind is still clear, and with all his physical strength he lifts himself and calls for the three key men to approach him. They are authorised to take his servants from the palace and go with Solomon and proclaim him king. These “servants” are the courtiers, army, and government officials; the heads of the departments of State and their officers and men.

Solomon is to ride on David’s own mule, the sign that the king comes in peace to bless, not judge. They are to ride in procession down to the Gihon spring and stream and there Nathan is to anoint Solomon as king. All the people will be able to see this from the walls of the city and the surrounding valleys and hills. They are then to blow the shofar and proclaim Solomon as king over the twelve tribes of Israel. Adonijah had gathered the elders of Judah only, but David seeks to re-emphasize the unity of the twelve tribes under his leadership. David actually places the name Israel ahead of the name Judah, to emphasize this unity and equality between the bickering factions in the land.

Benaiah is the first to cry a loud “Amen” and immediately heads out to gather the entire Old Guard battalions of the Army to do exactly what David has ordered. There is no time to waste. His testimony as recorded in verse 37 is a strong affirmation of loyalty to Solomon that the young man is able to depend upon, and he will make this man Benaiah his senior general. His blessing is that Solomon be made by God even greater than his father has been, and this is the hope, and the prayer for every ministry; that the new generation might stand upon the shoulders of the old one! Let us work so that we are replaced in ministries by those who will achieve even more than we have.

Zadok must have the anointing oil with him, for there is no time to go back to Gibeah to get it from the tabernacle. He is ready to take action. Matthew 25:1-13. This appears to be a horn of the original oil that Moses had made for the anointing of the High Priesthood. Exodus 30:22-35. This is a further piece of evidence that indicates the Philistines didn’t destroy the entire tabernacle when they slaughtered the people of Shiloh and that much was saved then, and later when Saul ordered the slaughter at Nob. 1 Samuel 4:1ff, 22:18ff.

The anointing ceremony will have been witnessed by all the people of the city and surrounding villages, for the route it took was a public one and the entire Old Guard of the standing army has marched out with them. The ceremony completed, there is a strong shofar blast, and this is answered by the people who witness the event, who gather all their musical instruments and burst into psalms of joy themselves. The sound explosion makes the earth shake and all in the city hear it, including those at Adonijah’s party.

Verses 41 – 48. It is always a dangerous and stupid thing to celebrate victory when the battle is not fought, let alone won. Adonijah and his guests are busy celebrating a victory he hasn’t won, and they now hear those celebrating the real victory. They hear the sounds of celebrating, with the entire population on the street rejoicing in Solomon’s choice by David. Joab is the one to voice his concern, for he has reason to be in fear of the noise outside.

At that very point Abiathar’s son Jonathan enters the gathering. He has not followed his father, but remained loyal to David. He was the runner from the High Priests during the Great Rebellion, and the one who fought for David all the way. 2 Samuel 17:15-22. When he stands at the door Adonijah foolishly believes he will be with his father in the claiming of the throne. He errs greatly in this, for the son is loyal to the real king, even though his father has become foolish.

Jonathan’s testimony to the rulership of David is strong and doctrinally based. He gives total commitment to Solomon, and is masterly in his use of words here, for he urges all others in this treasonable meeting to commit to the new king also, before he judges them. He begins by bluntly telling the gathering that David has made Solomon king. That ends the party, for anyone now celebrating Adonijah as king is at this point a traitor. He lists all the events, and the fact that the prophet Nathan, and Zadok, and all the Guard, are there with Solomon. There is no standing against Solomon now. All the power is with him and Adonijah has either to call for armed revolt or beg for mercy.

Jonathan repeats the fact that Solomon “sits on the throne of the kingdom” and awaits their oaths of allegiance. All the kings heads of departments have come and blessed the new king, and the sons of the old king had better get themselves there to do likewise! He reports the words of Benaiah without identifying him as the speaker (which tells us he was there to hear these words) and praises them. He also reports David’s blessing over the events he has ordered. Jonathan is taking a great risk in saying these things in the very party thrown to anoint the rival, but he seeks the salvation of these foolish men, and he will achieve his desired result. All will quickly leave the party and head for the throne room to pay allegiance to the real new king – or head out of the country.

Verses 49 – 52. As the full impact of Jonathan's straight talking words sink in all the guests at the party get very scared and all leave as quickly as they can. He has challenged them and saved their lives by his honesty and concern for their well being, and for the kingship. They are literally plucked from the fire! Jude 22-23. Adonijah went directly to the altar outside the tabernacle/tent that David had erected in which the Ark rested. He clung to the horns of the altar as the sign of his repentance, and plea for mercy from Solomon.

His movement from arrogance to paralysed fear in seconds indicates just how hopeless this man really is; he doesn't have the character or the moral strength to be a really powerful contender for the throne at all. He pleads with anyone who will listen to ask Solomon to swear to him that he will not be killed this day. He is indicating by his actions that he is repentant, but there is no word of repentance coming from his lips, just craven cowardice and fear of execution. He shows his cowardice in his actions here, for a brave man would have boldly entered the throne room, confessed his great presumption, and asked personally for forgiveness. His very weakness in this action may be one of the reasons why he isn't executed this day; he is in fact no threat to Solomon, but he will scheme and plot and will need to be eliminated before he causes others trouble. He will not be killed as a threat, but a stupid nuisance, so none will mourn for him.

Solomon's answer to his plea is instructive; if he will prove himself honest he will have nothing to fear, but if he proves himself false he will die as he should this day. He is brought into the throne room, pays homage to Solomon as the new king, and then is dismissed to his own house to go in peace, but knowing he will now be watched. This man is driven by fear of death, not by any genuine repentance, and his deep desire is still to be like the king, even if he can't be the king. It will cost him his life within weeks of this day.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. There is a time to die for us all. At that time when death is the Lord's plan for us, it is not right to be praying for health and restoration to this life, but for a peaceful and blessed entry into the next phase of our being in Christ Jesus. Death is not the end for us, but the beginning of eternity's worship service to the glory of the one who gave us eternal life. Pastors, let us preach more about death than we do, and let us prepare our people to go and be with the Lord.

2. Some people have ability to serve in high places and some do not. We are not to waste our time in pastoral training on those who will not make the grade and be capable of exercising pastoral leadership. The standards for selecting candidates for ministry are given in the Pastoral Epistles. We are not to train for ministry those who do not qualify by their own giftings and the previous holiness of their lives.

Adonijah had thirty five years to prove his worth in some form of ministry of service and had not done so; his inaction proved his unsuitability for higher office, as it does with all men. We are not to train those who have not already proved themselves in minor ministry in the church. Adonijah was unsuitable material for leadership and so David did not waste his time with him. His error was not in this, but in not spending some time with him encouraging him to serve the one who would lead the family and the nation.

3. Beware office politics. The Lord lifts up and the Lord casts down. Do not ever enter into any plots to make a man leader of any work. If a person has the stamp of the Lord over their candidacy for a pastoral role then they can be tested, trained, and appointed openly. Let nothing be done behind the cover of "secret meetings", for the Lord's candidates will always be clearly visible and acknowledged by all as God's men and women.

Just as there is a time to raise up new leaders, there is also the time for older leaders to step down. Abiathar shows us the foolishness of the man trying to hold an office long after his time has come to lay it aside. Let us be ready to lay aside all offices and move on to the next phase of our life with rejoicing.

4. Seek the friendship of those who value God's will alone for their lives. Seek the counsel of those who do not seek anything for themselves but everything for God, for then you will be with those who will be the heroes of God forever. Like Nathan the prophet, be ready to change your opinion of people when they do business with God and change their own lives. Nathan was ready to accept Bathsheba and David and their son, because he looked for those who were the friends of God and were seeking God's path, no matter what they had done beforehand. Nathan saw the truth of forgiveness and restoration; that all confessed sin is gone, as far as the east is from the west. Psalms 103:12.

5. Let us move quickly to deal with political crises in the church. To leave a rebellious group or individual acting as if they are in control is always a recipe for other foolish people to gather to their banner. Do not be surprised at the foolishness of sheep; that is why the Lord refers to us all as sheep, for we can all be foolish at times. We protect the sheep from those who cause trouble by moving very quickly against those causing mischief and ending their rebellion.

DYING GRACE

1. We are all here upon the earth as in a "strange country"; we are strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, and are not meant to be too comfortable here. Philippians 3:12-17, Hebrews 11:13, 1 Peter 2:11.

2. Death is the strangest thing we confront on this earth; the weirdness of being here one minute, alive, alert and warm, then a second later, dead, cooling and inert. Death is meant to appear strange to us, for it is the evidence before

us that we are not permanent inhabitants here, but simply playing out a part as we pass through. This is not a place we are meant to get attached to. Refer Death.

3. The death of believers is a precious thing to the God who has given his life to save us from the judgement of sin and death. 1 Samuel 26:21, 2 Kings 1:13-14, Psalms 49:8, 72:14, 116:15, 1 Peter 1:7, 2:4. Refer Grace.

4. We all must die, but that is not the end. 2 Timothy 4:7-8, Hebrews 11:13. The mature believers facing death see through it, to the other side where they meet with the Lord face to face. 1 Corinthians 13:12, 2 Corinthians 5:6-10.

5. Dying grace is provided to all believers who are looking to their Lord as they die, for his perfect provision for each of us from eternity past has everything we need provided in advance of our life, let alone our death itself. There are no surprises to God, and all things we face have provision for them there to be claimed by faith. 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, 2 Peter 2:9, Jude 24-25.

NOTES

CHAPTER 2**INTRODUCTION**

Solomon has the throne securely now, so there is the assurance of a smooth transition from the dying king David to the young man Solomon. We do not know how many days, weeks, or months pass before David actually dies. On that last day or so before his death he blesses his son with a blessing from a man who walked with God to the son he hopes will continue to walk with the Lord also, but he also warns his son against those who will still create problems for him while they live.

Solomon is on the throne as the regent and the people, and all the nations round about, now know that there will be no chaos at the death of the old king, and that the armies of Israel will remain dominant in the area. This chapter records the death of David and then notes the deaths of the conspirators associated with Adonijah.

These executions and one exile extinguish the last gasps of the rebellion of Adonijah and his associates. This man proves himself far from guiltless in his behaviour after David's death, and the others associated with him are in some way implicated in his plot to secure Abishag as a wife. That request means he is claiming his father's concubine/wife, and therefore the throne itself.

Solomon appears to modern eyes harsh and brutal here, but he is eliminating what would become a full conspiracy-rebellion later and cause the shedding of innocent blood. Solomon will move quickly and slay the guilty, and so avoid the war that may have resulted from inaction, or more forgiving words. There is a time for forgiveness and there is a time for judgement, and Solomon applies wisdom here and judges and executes men who prove themselves guilty of plotting against the throne. He doesn't need to wait until another 50,000 men die in an open rebellion!

1 KINGS 2:1-46

1 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, **2** I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; **3** And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: **4** That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel. **5** Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet. **6** Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace. **7** But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother. **8** And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I sware to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. **9** Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood. **10** So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. **11** And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. **12** Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly. **13** And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably. **14** He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on. **15** And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his from the LORD. **16** And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on. **17** And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife. **18** And Bathsheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto the king. **19** Bathsheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand. **20** Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay. **21** And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. **22** And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah. **23** Then king Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life. **24** Now therefore, as the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day. **25** And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died. **26** And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the LORD God before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted. **27** So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh. **28** Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab

had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. 29 And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him. 30 And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. 31 And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father. 32 And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah. 33 Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD. 34 So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. 35 And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar. 36 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. 37 For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head. 38 And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. 39 And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath. 40 And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. 41 And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again. 42 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word that I have heard is good. 43 Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with? 44 The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head; 45 And king Solomon shall be blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever. 46 So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 4. There is a time to die; a time when the individual's life upon the earth has come to its natural close. **Ecclesiastes 3:1-7, 12:1-7, 13, 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 2 Peter 1:13-15.** Until that time it is appropriate to always pray for healing and restoration of health in a person's life. **James 5:14-15.** Once we get to the final point however, it is no longer appropriate to pray for longer life upon the earth, for the day has come to go forward through the veil of death and be with the Lord who died and rose again to give us confidence of eternal life.

David knows his time has come and he calls his son to him to pass on his last blessing and advice to him before he leaves this earth and goes to be with his God. David reminds his son of the DAVIDIC COVENANT. He reminds Solomon that he sits upon the throne that the Lord God has given, and that his blessing upon the throne is conditional on his obedience. He tells him bluntly that the right of his son to sit upon the throne is dependent upon his father's obedience, and that if he fails the Lord then the kingdom will be lost to his sons. David is simply stating what Moses stated, from the Lord, in the Mosaic Law, in Leviticus 26, and Deuteronomy 27-28.

David's instructions are very specific and practical, as Paul's will later be to Timothy, who will take over from him, 1 Timothy 1:18-20, 6:13-19, 2 Timothy 4:1-5.

1. Death is a normal end to life – so Solomon is to live in light of his end, for he too will die as David dies. This is David's way of encouraging his son not to be too much influenced by the great wealth that the kingdom has and so lose himself in pleasure.
2. He is to be strong in his decision making, for the nation, as any organisation, needs strength of character at its top.
3. He is to "play the man". This means to be worthy of respect as a man, with the manly virtues of courage under pressure, a willingness to die for a good cause, and genuine friendship towards those who are loyal and faithful to the kingdom.
4. He is to keep the Mosaic Law, in its entirety. This is a reminder that the king has his own copy of the Law of Moses and that literacy was common in Israel. Solomon is to saturate himself in the Word of God and let its precepts rule his deliberations in all things. He is to be a man of the Book. Deuteronomy 17:18-20.
5. He is told that prosperity for the nation depends upon the State being grounded in the precepts of the Law of Moses, and that as the King, he sets the standards of behaviour, worship and commerce through his own obedience to the Law.
6. God demands total worship, of mind and heart, and anything less than total devotion to the Lord will lead to ruin for the nation. He is warned that his sons need to grow up with God's Word and seeing their father obedient to it, for God does not have grand-children. If his children are not obedient to the Law of Moses, they cannot claim the Davidic Covenant to protect them against disaster, for disaster will overwhelm them. Their blessing is dependent upon their obedience to God; their natural relationship with David will not save them from anything.

David makes the reality of walking through life with God very clear to Solomon, and he stands without excuse before God due to the plain speaking of his father here. David's words run a parallel course to Moses, and Joshua's own advice to the later leaders and kings of Israel. Deuteronomy 17:14-20, 31:6, Joshua 1:5-9, 22:1-6. Solomon himself will pass this wisdom on to his sons in Proverbs 3:1-10, but his later life will sadly set another example. 1 Kings 11:1-13. Solomon will become one of the greatest kings of history, yet he will fall short in the very spiritual area that he shone so brightly in at the start of his reign.

While it is important to note these facts before we start, let us also remember that Solomon faced temptations that few men or women today ever face in their life times. The blessing of great prosperity is also the greatest test a man can have, for priorities are easily lost when wealth is so plentiful that all your desires can be met in seconds. Proverbs 11:28, 13:7, 21:13, 17, 22:1-2, 22-23, Philipians 4:11, 1 Timothy 6:8, Hebrews 13:5.

Verses 5 – 9. Three families are now mentioned by David; two for judgement, and one for blessing. The first is Joab. Joab was guilty of two foul and politically dangerous murders that could have opened the door to greater evils still. 2 Samuel 3:26-39, 20:7-13. They were foul because he killed men when at peace, after a truce had been made. They were dangerous because he implicated David in them and potentially created further bloodshed in civil war. He had escaped censure during David's life, only because of military necessity for such a ruthless commander, but David tells Solomon that he is to execute Joab if he gives him the slightest excuse.

His death penalty is hanging over him and any actions that implicate him in any conspiracy are to be followed through with immediate execution. Joab is too dangerous to be left alive and be left to undertake political scheming behind the scenes. David leaves it to the wisdom of Solomon to decide when he is to be executed, but he is to be ready to do so at the first signs of trouble from him.

The family of Bazillai are however, in contrast to Joab, to be blessed for as long as they live. This old man gave freely of his substance to assist David in the days of the great rebellion of Absalom and his son is to be fed at Solomon's table for as long as he wishes to remain there. 2 Samuel 19:31-38. This man's kindness and financial support ensured the kingdom was saved and David wants his son to pay this great debt to Bazillai's family all his life.

The third family is that of the Saulist, Shimei. He had supported the family of Saul against the family of David. He severely cursed David as he fled from Jerusalem, and in so doing he had cursed God's anointed king. Whatever David's faults, he was king and the Lord alone is to curse men in leadership roles He has given them, and the Lord alone is to execute judgement upon them. 2 Samuel 16:5-13, 1 Timothy 6:3-5, James 5:19-20.

David promised to save his life on his return, even though he was entitled to execute him on sight. 2 Samuel 19:10-23. He advises Solomon to watch him closely, for as we noted when discussing chapter nineteen of 2 Samuel, this man is implicated in some way in plots against the house of David. Any action that indicates he is still plotting is to be taken as reason to execute him. Age (hoar head) is not to make Solomon hesitate in executing any of these potential plotters against his throne. If they act in any way that is suspicious they are to be executed immediately.

Verses 10 – 12. David died and was buried "in the city of David". This is interesting, as the Islamic structure called the tomb of David is a long way outside the old city of David's day as far as we know, and so is most likely not the actual tomb. As we will see later from the quantities of food consumed by Solomon's court each day the number of people in David and Solomon's city was vast. Even with the numbers of soldiers and their families the number would be over 10,000 and this is far more than could be housed in the old area of the city that is called "the city of David" by the archaeologists today. I believe that David's city was far larger than we have thought and spread in Solomon's day well into the area encompassed by the present Moslem walls of what is now known as "the Old City".

David's tomb was believed to have been identified at the time of the apostles and was able to be pointed to from the Temple of Herod. Acts 2:29. It is as yet undiscovered, but must be somewhere south of the Temple Mount. All the tombs of the kings of Israel and Judah buried in this city were sadly desecrated, bones scattered by the Babylonians during their invasion in 586BC when they destroyed the Temple of Solomon itself. This was due to the later evils of the kings who came from David's line. Jeremiah 8:1-6. David dies with DYING GRACE in the Lord's time, and his body is laid to rest in Jerusalem, and although his family is buried in Bethlehem he is spoken of being with them after death. Psalms 68:19-20, 116:15. This is a lovely way of reminding us of the biblical hope/confidence of life after death with those who shared our love of the Lord. The likely fate of his body and tomb (desecrated by the Babylonians) is also a reminder to us that the Lord does not need an intact body buried neatly and safely somewhere to guarantee resurrection.

Verses 13 – 17. In today's world we may not spot the evil intentions of this man, but there are a couple of clues to Adonijah's malice. Firstly remember his age; he is over thirty five and will already have one wife at least and not need to lust after Abishag, indeed he shouldn't have had opportunity to do anything except see her across the room, if even that. This is neither love, nor even straight forward lust, but it is political manoeuvring.

To have the wife or concubine of the past king was to be recognised as the king. Bathsheba may not have seen it because she was a mistress and became a wife and may have a blind spot here, but also she knew Abishag was a nurse, not a true wife, for David had never had sex with her. She may have felt on that basis that the request was just lust/love based and she may have felt sorry for the girl, who was now locked away, not allowed to be wife to anyone. Whatever her emotion or concern she didn't see the malice of Adonijah, and sought the opportunity to help him and

thereby possibly secure his good will for the future. She didn't need to do this, for Solomon was king now, and Adonijah was no threat or use at all, and Solomon will see through this play acting by his devious half brother very quickly.

Notice his approach, and Bathsheba's initial fear that he may mean no good, and possibly even be coming to murder her. She is still feeling threatened by this man, and when he is pleasant she may have been relieved and psychologically more likely to try to help him. He is a nasty man this Adonijah, and Bathsheba's reaction to him tells me that he has been a bully in the palace well before these days. Notice next his words to Bathsheba about his being "robbed" of the kingship by Solomon because God stepped in. This is a glimpse into this man's character, for he still feels he has been robbed and resents Solomon, and grudgingly only accepts "God's will". He is actually planning still to unseat Solomon and use Abishag as a pawn in his game. He hopes to slip this request past Solomon's guard and then use it against him and claim the throne later. It is so pathetic, but its what narcissists do, for they live in a fantasy world of self importance.

Verses 18 – 25. Without realising the full implications of the request Bathsheba approaches the king and is welcomed into his presence. She simply speaks the request to her son and will have been surprised by the reaction. Solomon is only twenty years old but he has received a good education from David's old counsellors, and he has taken it all on board. He sees immediately that Adonijah is still plotting and that he hasn't accepted his younger brother's kingship.

Solomon may have been on the receiving end of this man's bullying for all his life and I suspect it is a lot of experience that is drawn on, for at this point it is clear he cannot be left alive to plot further. Benaiah is dispatched and Adonijah is killed immediately and buried without ceremony. This was vital to protect the God appointed kingship, and Solomon was absolutely right in eliminating this persistent plotter. Solomon then turns to the most likely fellow plotters; Abiathar the High Priest, and Joab the old general. Adonijah's own plotting has unhinged him and disclosed the on-going threat from the others also. Psalms 64:8, 140:7-12, Proverbs 18:6-7,

Verses 26 – 34. Abiathar has served David well for many years and he carried the Ark into battle many times as head of the priests responsible for its going on campaigns. 1 Samuel 11:11. Because of this great service over forty years, the old priest is not forgiven his present plotting, but he is banished to his home town, not executed. He is sent back to Anathoth, where possibly his descendent Jeremiah will rise up to serve the Lord many centuries later. Solomon's clemency opens the door to the later blessing of the Lord through the priests of Anathoth. Jeremiah 1:1-3.

There is a time to execute evil, and a time to banish plotters, and Solomon has the wisdom to know who can be silenced and chastened by exile, and who must be killed to end their evil. It is important to Solomon, now that the plotters have shown their hands, that justice is executed upon them immediately and justly, so that all in the land get the message that Solomon will not tolerate evil. Numbers 35:30-34, Deuteronomy 19:11-13.

Old Joab knows his number is up when He hears news of Adonijah's death and Abiathar's exile, and he flees to the tabernacle and he clings to the horns of the Altar there. This saved Adonijah a few weeks before but it will not save Joab today for he also is apparently implicated in the conspiracy centred round the innocent Abishag. There is some confusion as to whether he fled to the old tabernacle of Moses at Gibeah or the tent on Mt Zion that David had erected. It is most likely it was the new tabernacle on Mt Zion which sheltered the Ark.

Benaiah finds Joab and he requests to be slain at the altar itself, but Benaiah balks at that and seeks Solomon's second opinion. Solomon's words in verses 31-33 are a formal pronouncement of the guilty verdict upon Joab for the murders of Abner and Amasa. Solomon formally reads out the guilty verdict for these two murders to Benaiah, and in the presence of the entire court, and this is the basis of the words that Benaiah will utter over Joab and then stab him with his sword and kill him as he clings to the altar. His body is taken away to his own house and he is buried there. Perhaps he confessed his sins as he clung to the altar horns. He certainly had the time to do so, time that he did not give his victims!

Verses 35 – 46. The confirmation of the new general of the host and High Priest is then formally made publically so that none might doubt the king's resolve. The next plotter and schemer is Shimei and Solomon gives him the formal punishment of what we now call "house arrest". He was not permitted to cross the Kidron Valley, and as an old man himself now he had no need to until his servants ran away to Gath, but even then he can delegate the job. Gath was the centre of recruitment for David's Old Guard, but it was also a centre of Philistine rebellion.

The writer doesn't say it but my suspicion is that Shimei is in some way working a rebellious plan in association with Philistine elements in this "escape" of his servants. There was no need for the old man to go himself, he could have sent servants, or sought the king's intervention on his behalf. He ignores the king's ruling because he doesn't respect Solomon and betrays the spirit of rebellion that led him to abuse David those years before. Solomon takes the opportunity he gives him and executes him straight away. Solomon as a young man saw this old crook's abuse of David!

The message is clear; if Solomon says something he means it and you had better listen to his words! The kingdom is now strongly established in Solomon's hands and all have seen that he will act with strength of character and ruthless determination to execute justice. He will be tested next in the area of wisdom. Proverbs 25:1-5.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Natural relationships do not guarantee anything in this world. Our children will not be great believers because of anything we do, but only by being as obedient as we are! Our role is to mentor good habits of obedience to the Word of

God, but each generation stands alone before the Lord, and each generation stands before the Lord facing the same holy demands. We must obey His Word.

2. Rebellion needs to be stamped out with ruthlessness. When those the Lord has anointed to lead are attacked the entire weight of the leadership of the local church must come upon those who have stood against the will of the Lord.

3. If a ruler disobeys the Word of God and clearly has sinned in a way to bring disgrace upon the work of the Lord, then great care is to be taken to deal with that leader justly but quickly. No action is to be taken unless there are least two solid witnesses to the leader's evil, apostasy, or sin. The Elders of the local church are to meet and discuss the evidence and take action to deal with their fellow elder and remove him from his office if he has become disqualified by his actions.

REFLECTION UPON OUR ETERNAL LIFE

1. **DEFINITION:** Life belonging to the ages (Greek word *aionios*). This is the life of the believer who had a beginning in time but whose life will continue through the other side of death into the infinite future.

2. Mankind were created for eternity. God's purpose was to create a being to enjoy fellowship with forever. 2 Peter 3: 9.

3. The issue for entry into eternal life is faith in Christ. The choice for man is clearly stated in John 3:36, 5:24, Acts 13:46, Galatians 6:8, Matthew 25:6.

4. Those who are serious about life and concerned about death ask about it. Matthew 13:40-43, 19:16, Mark 10:17, Luke 10:25, 18:18.

5. The Lord's words provide the answer to the questions about eternal life. John 6:68, Romans 5:20, 21; 6:22, 23. It is the Lord who gives eternal life, John 5:39, 40, 12:50.

6. The Lord gives eternal life to those who believe on him, John 10:28, 17:2,

The door to fellowship and all that goes with it is opened by faith in him as Saviour. John 3:15,16; 6:40,47 Acts 13:48.

"To Eat His Flesh and Drink His Blood" is graphic language to picture his work and our need to appropriate it for ourselves. John 6:54, 4:14.

7. While it may only be fully known in heaven the believer may grasp a glimpse of eternal life here and now by way of anticipation and relationship. Knowing God is a glimpse of eternal life now, John 17:3, and fellowship with him is the joy of every believer now and forever. 1 John 1:1-4, 5:10-12, 20, 1 Timothy 6:12, 19.

8. Eternal life is received in full at the resurrection/rapture when we all receive our new bodies from the Lord. Rewards are received then to enjoy with the Lord forever. We are all urged to live each day with the eternal life perspective in mind, thinking of our place with the Lord forever. Matthew 19:29, 30, Mark 10:29-31, John 12:25 & 4:36, Romans 2:6,7.

9. Eternal Life is the believers hope, associated with the Rapture and Resurrection, and should be on our mind through each day, as it sets us apart from the unbelievers who have no such hope. Philippians 3:20, 21, Titus 1:2, 2:13, 3:7, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 4:13, 1 Peter 1:3,

10. The assurance of eternal life is grounded in the promise of God given through Christ. 1 John 2:24,25, 1 John 5:13-15.

NOTES

CHAPTER 3**INTRODUCTION**

The parallel passage to the one before us is 2 Chronicles chapter 1. Remember the differences between the two accounts of Israel's history are instructive. The books named "Kings" record the political perspective on events, whereas the "Chronicles" record the priestly perspective of events and so in that account we find additional material related to the worship aspects of the kingdom of Solomon. Turn to 2 Chronicles chapter 1 now and read that first chapter fully as it covers the events of 1 Kings 3 and 4 from the priestly perspective and there is interesting additional information there.

Notice that the tabernacle at Saul's old capital of Gibeah (not Gibeon – copyist error here) was the site of the actual tabernacle of Moses, now four hundred years old, and that the brazen altar that Bezaleel had made was also there before it, and still functioning. Exodus 35:30-35, 36:1-9, 37:1-29, 38:1-7. Other things may not have survived, but these two items are described as being originals, and this is the first formal record we have of them surviving the years without replacements being made (although extensive repairs would have been made down the centuries).

The entire old tabernacle structure built in Moses day, and its associated furniture is clearly old and battered after 400 plus years of daily use, and it may be that seeing the state of all the items this day decided Solomon that they all had to be replaced. Solomon will replace all the items, using the originals as the models, but making larger and more glorious replacement items. We do not know precisely where the original tabernacle tent material was placed after the Temple of Solomon was completed, nor where the old furniture was placed, for it appears that the Ark alone amongst the furniture enters the new Temple to play an on-going part in national worship.

Anything associated with the worship of the Lord was considered holy and was to be either burned, or stored in a holy place, and so I suspect these things entered the new Temple of Solomon to be stored away, or possibly incorporated in some way in the building. It may be that the other furniture items from the original Holy Place were also placed above the Holy Place of the new Temple; we will look for clues to this as we go through the appropriate passages in later chapters.

1 KINGS 3:1-28

1 And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about. **2** Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days. **3** And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. **4** And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. **5** In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. **6** And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. **7** And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. **8** And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. **9** Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? **10** And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. **11** And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; **12** Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. **13** And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. **14** And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. **15** And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants. **16** Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. **17** And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. **18** And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. **19** And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. **20** And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. **21** And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear. **22** And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king. **23** Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living. **24** And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. **25** And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. **26** Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. **27** Then the king answered and said, Give her the living

child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof. 28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

REFLECTIONS

Verse 1. This early marriage to an Egyptian princess will come back to bite Solomon's son, for by this first dynastic marriage Solomon opens the door to Egyptian interference later in his reign, and in the reign of his son. He has also established a precedent by way of forming alliances through marriages that will be hard to break later with other pagan States. It was normal for kings to take wives from their allies and so by both treaty and blood bind themselves together, but it was not to be God's way, and he was to take a stand on this – but does not. The Egyptian pharaoh at the time was not strong and would be the last of his dynasty. He is possibly Psusennes, the last of the twenty first dynasty.

The next pharaoh will be Sesonchis, or Sheshonk (Shishak) of the twenty second dynasty. He will conquer Jerusalem in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign due to the foolishness of that son of Solomon. 1 Kings 14:22-26. This Egyptian princess wife of Solomon may have become a believer, but it is doubtful. This is Solomon's first grave error. God does not want us to ally ourselves with unbelievers. The dynastic alliance ends with all the gold of Solomon heading for Egypt. We are not to be unequally yoked in any enterprise of note with an unbeliever, or even a totally carnal believer. Numbers 16:21, Ezra 10:11, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Hebrews 7:26.

Verses 2 - 4. Since the days of the prophet Samuel the "high places" had been places of both bone fide and at times pagan worship, but gradually they had become places where false worship entered into the land from the paganism that surrounded the Israelites. 1 Samuel 9:9-27, 10:5,13, Solomon loved the Lord and at this time had no time for any compromise with paganism. Now this comment by the writer about his love for the Lord is important, because he has been noting things that hint that Solomon is possibly very flawed in his character, and that these flaws will emerge later in his reign.

It is important to note that he loves the Lord and was obedient to the Lord early in his reign. This also helps us with the marriage to Pharaoh's daughter, for it tells us that with her at least, he required her to worship the Lord as he did. His "fault" as the writer sees it, is that he supported the many altars around the land himself and worshipped at the important ones when he was in those areas. This will change when he builds the Temple, as he wants it to be the sole focus of national worship.

The most important shrine in the land was the one associated with the old tabernacle of Moses at Gibeah. Within a very short time of David's death and Solomon's confirmation as king, he goes to the old Benjamite capital of Gibeah to worship at the altar of Moses, on the original brazen altar before the old tabernacle. This powerfully gives several messages to all observers; firstly it was a message of continuity between the houses of Saul and David. It also binds Benjamin closely to Judah, and eliminates any thought of revenge against the house of Saul, for it means respect for the house of Saul and his tribe.

Coming from the new capital to the old one to offer up sacrifices had great significance for all present and for the pagan nations around. It was a powerful proclamation that the warrior-kingdom of Israel begun by Saul was continuing under a new monarch. Then, the sacrifices here emphasise the old tabernacle as the original centre of Israel's united worship, and kindle the desire for the restoration of this unity in worship that was present in the days when it operated as the fresh new centre of Israelite worship. Many will however continue to worship at their local community shrines, and this will be at the heart of later idolatry, and be the basis of Israel's and Judah's later judgement. In the Chronicles account the full extent of the visit to Gibeah is also described and in both accounts the enormity of the sacrificial activity is seen. This is a great time of worship and praise to the Lord and is a festival of unity for all the tribes.

One thousand offerings are made upon the altar. This probably involved a great feast also of the sacrificial meal produced as a result, and from this number of animals, possibly 10,000-20,000 adults are here as part of Solomon's retinue for the sacrifices to worship and to eat of the sacrificial meal. This sacrificial process would have taken several days and nights, with troops of priests working to kill and offer up the prescribed parts of the animals, cook the other portions, and prepare the associated Meal Offerings. It may be that the central altar was used for a portion of each sacrifice, and that other altars were used all over the local area, but it would be possible to offer this many animals on one altar, it would just take a considerable time. When the Temple is dedicated the numbers of sacrifices are even greater, and the crowd is greater. 1 Chronicles 8:62-63.

While it is recorded that these were "Burnt Offerings", it would be most likely that these were the full array of Levitical Offerings. Leviticus 1 – 7. Portions of all offerings were burnt, so they can be referred to in this manner, but most of them were consumed by the people present as well. Only the Burnt Offering was totally consumed on the altar, and the time taken for it was significant, so it was normal for there to be only one specific Burnt Offering and then multiples of the others, of which only a portion was burnt, and the rest cooked and consumed.

Verses 5 – 9. God honours the worship and appears to Solomon during one of the nights he is there in Gibeah. Solomon may be sleeping in the very palace of Saul as he is his successor, and he has prayed to the Lord there for wisdom to be the best king he can be after the manner of his father David. During this night the dream from the Lord comes and the Lord speaks directly to him through this means of revelation. Solomon hears the words of the Lord asking him what he wants to function as the king he seeks to be. God's question is a test for this man, but his heart is, at this point, absolutely right before the Lord, and his request is the best possible.

Solomon's answer is a masterly piece of biblically based prayer. This man has been saturated in the Word of God and when the opportunity comes he doesn't need to hesitate, for he has already given thought to what he needs. He notes that God has dealt with David in great mercy according as David has walked before the Lord in righteousness. This is absolutely correct. God has been merciful, but He has also judged David for the great sins in his life. Solomon recognises the truth of the five cycles of national discipline here, and recognises that he also must walk rightly before the Lord or he cannot expect the mercy of God to continue over him. He acknowledges God's mercy and grace that has led to his sitting on the throne rather than an unworthy other son of David.

Solomon acknowledges his youth and need for God's wisdom to assist him. He has already shown great wisdom, but he does not rest in his human ability, even though it is above other men. He seeks the wisdom of God to rule the kingdom, for he recognises that he needs the power of the Holy Spirit to really rule safely and well. The size of the population of Israel under David and Solomon would reach its greatest numbers of people, and they would not be surpassed until the days of the late Second Temple and our own modern days. Solomon has a humility here that is neither fake, nor political; it is a genuine sense of being overwhelmed by the task, and the genuine desire for the Lord's assistance to do it well. Psalms 119:33-35, 73-75, 143-144, Proverbs 2:1-9, 3:13-26, 16:16, 20:11-13.

Verses 10 – 14. The Lord delights in Solomon's prayer. Proverbs 15:8. This is another reminder from our writer that Solomon is a mighty spiritual believer at this point. Solomon has cut to the heart of good governance, and he has sought the wisdom to make the right decisions based upon the biblical priorities. Solomon has not been self centred in his prayers, but has sought the spiritual gifting to serve the people of God. This lack of narcissism is rewarded by the Lord giving him all the things he hasn't requested for himself. Mathew 6:33, 19:30, 20:8-16, 22:38.

We must watch the content of our prayers, for they can be lists of things we want to enjoy, rather than things we need to serve the Lord. Solomon is told that none will be like him before or afterwards for wisdom to rule. He will be the greatest ruler of all time in the area of wisdom. The blessing of the Lord for long life is then made conditional upon his obedience to the Lord's Word. Deuteronomy 25:15-16, Psalms 21:4, 91:15-16, 132:11-12, Proverbs 3:1-3, 13-19.

Verse 15. Solomon awakens following the dream and knows what it is and sees its great significance and comfort for him. In great gratitude to the Lord he prepares to leave Gibeah and march his retinue back to Jerusalem where they will hold a second worship celebration. Solomon returns to Jerusalem after he has had this dream and goes straight to the Tabernacle that David pitched for the Ark and he stands before the Ark there. He prays there also, and offers up all the sacrifices, and has a great feast there.

Numbers of animals offered are not mentioned here, but as Solomon is back home they could have taken even more time over this time of worship and feasting and it may have been a seven or eight day period, possibly even tying into an annual feast time. It may be that the second time of worship and feasting was superior to the first at Gibeah. This wouldn't surprise me, for the purpose of Solomon is to magnify Jerusalem as the new national worship centre and capital, and it would be normal to make this a more magnificent celebration than the earlier one at the old capital. Gibeah spoke of what was old, past, and worn out, but still powerful, and Jerusalem spoke of what was new and forward focused.

Verses 16 – 28. Solomon's next test is of his new wisdom. He is tested by a case that has baffled the Levitical judges of the two women's area, and the lower level courtly judges. It is brought before the king possibly to openly test his wisdom. In today's world we would order genetic tests for the women and the baby and securely identify the mother, but Solomon had no such possibility. He uses his wisdom with these two prostitutes who have fallen out with each other, even though they shared their house as their work place for adultery.

These are women considered sinful, but they still are entitled to correct judgement and Solomon devotes himself to this case about the baby. His judgement is masterful, for he knows that the true mother will not want her baby harmed. He identifies that love is present even where people are sinful and fallen, and that all are to be treated justly in his realm and given the full protection and judgement of the Law. The people see his wisdom and praise God for the great, and valuable gift the Lord has given their king. Proverbs 3:1-5.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. God's people do not need alliances with Satan's people. No matter what the apparent benefits alliances with anyone other than a spiritual believer is fraught with future dangers. We are to trust the Lord alone to advance His Plan, and depend upon His strength and His godly resources alone. No Christian work is to accept any money from non-Christian sources, nor take any gifts given to glorify any unsaved person. Many believing institutions are tempted to take millions of dollars in memory of an unbeliever, or from a charitable minded unbeliever. Even if these are good people, the money cannot be accepted for Christian work lest the unbeliever think they have purchased an inheritance in heaven by their good works. Let them be led to the Lord first and then accept their gift.

2. Worship is meant to unite the people of God in praise for their one Saviour and Lord. Worship that divides believers is not genuine Holy Spirit filled worship. The Lord makes clear in Matthew 7:13-25, that by the fruit of an action is the heart behind it known. All godly worship will be associated with the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

3. Godly wisdom is required for good governance. The Holy Spirit will provide over time wisdom to all who consistently walk before the Lord in obedience and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom develops through time as we walk in the filling of the Holy Spirit and apply God's Word to our daily life. Over time the ability to see the wise applications of doctrines will develop in the maturing believer.

MEDITATION - "ONE THING"

1. One thing is a certainty - DEATH (Ecclesiastes 3:19)
2. One thing lacking - COUNTING THE COST (Mark 10:21)
3. One thing known - CONFIDENCE (John 9:25)
4. One thing is needful - CONDUCT/CONDITION (Luke 10:42)
5. One thing to do - CONSECRATION (Philippians 3:13)
6. One thing not to be ignorant about - TIME (2 Peter 3:8)
7. One thing desired - TO DWELL IN GOD'S HOUSE (Psalm 27:4)

THE FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The filling of the Holy Spirit produces fruit in the life (love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance). (Galatians 5:22-23) Note that "fruit" is singular - all the characters are produced at the same time in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Fruit of the Spirit is also listed as follows:-
 Romans 14:17 - Righteousness, Peace, Joy
 Colossians 3:12-15 - Compassion, Kindness, Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Forgiveness, Love, Peace, Thankfulness
 1Thessalonians 1:3 - Faith, Love, Endurance, Hope

2. In principle, it is the imitation of God (Ephesians 5:1). The reason we are left on the earth after salvation is to produce fruit. (John 15:16, Philippians 4:17)

3. We produce fruit by hearing the word (Mark 4:20-28) and applying it to our lives. (Hebrews 4:2)

4. Failure to grow and produce fruit means divine discipline even to the point of the believer's early departure from this life. (Luke 13:6-9 John 15:2)

5. Rewards in eternity are distributed on the basis of faithful production. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10)

6. Fruit is not to be confused with spiritual gifts. These are listed in (Romans 12:6-8; 15:18-19; 1Corinthians 12:8,10; 1Corinthians 12:28-30; Ephesians 4:1) and other places.

7. One can know Christians by their fruit (Matthew 7:16-20; Luke 6:43-45; 1John 3:10 & 11; John 15:8) especially by their love (John 13:35) but not by their gifts, as Satan can imitate them (2Thessalonians 2:9).

8. Three natural fruits represent some of the facets of the fruit of the Spirit: Apples - love, Grapes - Joy, Pomegranates - Peace.

9. In Galatians 5: 22-23 the fruit of the Spirit is divided into three sections
 [a] Love, Joy and Peace towards God;
 [b] Patience, Goodness and Kindness towards others;
 [c] Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control towards oneself.

NOTES

CHAPTER 4**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter introduces the great temptation that Solomon faced. Adversity places demands upon us, but they are demands that have urgency and fear associated with them, and so they drive us to our knees most often. Prosperity is an altogether different type of spiritual test for any person to face. The challenge of prosperity is the challenge to think, reflect, pray, and apply doctrine into the midst of situations that are associated with blessing, peace, and pleasantness. Things are so wonderful and relaxing that the person often doesn't pray over something, simply because it doesn't feel like a spiritual issue.

Prosperity is a test that many fail, even after great privation has previously taught them to walk close to God. Solomon will fail this test of prosperity over time, but as I have already reflected, most of us would also fail such a test, if we lived the life of Solomon. Our writer is helpful here in this chapter, for he gives us a pen sketch of the power, majesty and wealth of Solomon, so we can appreciate this man's life well before we feel offended at his actions and bring judgement to bear. Solomon faces the greatest test that any man can face, and we need to start his kingly life story by stabilising ourselves in the facts of his wealth and power.

The dominant Jewish theology at this time taught that wealth was a sign of God's prosperity and blessing upon a person. The removal of prosperity was therefore considered by many the greatest of all tests a man could face. Hence it was at the heart of Satan's temptation of Job. Job 1:9-12, 20-22. Through that, the earliest of Biblical books, Job and his friends must all learn that God rules over all the "Kingdoms of Pride". Job 41:34. They must learn that there are reasons for things happening in this life that are well beyond the simplistic understandings of men.

However Job's story still ends with the restoration of his prosperity, for that remains the essential final test for a mature believer; will they receive all things "as from the Lord", or will they have their hearts turned away from God by them? We will all die and leave everything we "own" behind, so we are challenged to walk through this life with a mental attitude of detachment from things that do not enter eternity with us. Job 42:1-17.

Our writer understands that morality and holiness are tested far more powerfully by prosperity than they are by the removal of it. One man in the life ministry of Jesus stands out as the one who illustrates this principle also. Jesus spoke to a "Rich Young Ruler" who faced the very tests of Solomon, and who had succeeded in remaining moral throughout until the day he saw Jesus and spoke with Him. He had come to the place where he knew he was not completely right before God, and he sought a deeper walk with God, and he had not let the great wealth he had turn his head; or so he believed until being challenged. Luke 18:18-30. The great prophets Daniel, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are tested in this area by the loss of all their physical status symbols within Hebrew culture, and Daniel then faced the ultimate prosperity test.

This young man who approached Jesus has not fallen into lust for sex, nor been too influenced by lust for power and approbation, but he was very influenced by the wealth that had become the backdrop for his life, and he couldn't think of walking away from that life style. He could not see himself following Jesus and sleeping in the open. He had never done the "camping experience" without servants and all the trappings of his wealth. He could not think about walking away from wealth and following the call of God upon his life.

Solomon will get distracted by these very things. Solomon has excellent administration, wise counsel from others, respect and admiration from all, and wealth flowing into his kingdom from all around it, and through taxation, from within it. We have previously thought about both wealth and poverty as challenges to spiritual life, so review your thinking on both in your own experience, and then let us advance here. Let us see and fully understand this man, his power, wealth, and his life style.

1 KINGS 4:1-34

1 So king Solomon was king over all Israel. **2** And these were the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, **3** Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder. **4** And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests: **5** And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend: **6** And Ahishar was over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute. **7** And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision. **8** And these are their names: The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim: **9** The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Bethshemesh, and Elonbethhanan: **10** The son of Hessed, in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh, and all the land of Hopher: **11** The son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife: **12** Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Bethshean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Bethshean to Abelmeholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam: **13** The son of Geber, in Ramothgilead; to him pertained the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead; to him also pertained the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brasen bars: **14** Ahinadab the son of Iddo had Mahanaim: **15** Ahimaaz was in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife: **16** Baanah the son of Hushai was in Asher and in Aloth: **17** Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar: **18** Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin: **19** Geber the son of Uri was

in the country of Gilead, in the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and he was the only officer which was in the land. 20 Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry. 21 And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. 22 And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, 23 Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl. 24 For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphseh even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him. 25 And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon. 26 And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. 27 And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing. 28 Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge. 29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. 30 And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. 32 And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. 33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. 34 And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 6. The writer is writing this chapter as if Solomon has just become king, yet there are clues here that the list of these men who served him, may have been recorded from a list as it was at the mid point of his reign. Verse eleven records that one man has a daughter of Solomon as his wife. This places us at around twenty years into his reign.

Now the way it is written indicates that these men listed here served from around the beginning of his reign, and for some, they served until the end. His son Rehoboam seeks the counsel of his father's advisers and they are all old men then. 1 Kings 12:6-9. Solomon begins with a young and middle aged cabinet and they age with him. These men produce the greatest 40 years of peace and prosperity ever in the history of Israel. It is this dynamic combination of youth and experience that under the wisdom of young Solomon brings the best government.

The first man of the cabinet is Azariah, the son of Zadok the priest. Now scholarly debate centres around who this man was, for he appears, from 1 Chronicles 5:34-35, to be the grand-son of Zadok, and the son of Ahimaaz. Is this possible given the ages of the men? While great commentators argue over this, it is possible that Zadok's grand-son was the Prime Minister, and that he was as young as Pit the Younger was when he took over the English Parliament and Empire as its Prime Minister. Remember, Alexander the Great was around nineteen when he led his armies to conquer Persia. All the leaders of the Royal Air Force fighter squadrons of the Battle of Britain in World War II were in their early twenties. In great times very young men can be given roles that they excel in.

This is not a predominantly young group, but includes a number of experienced middle aged men in the cabinet, and Solomon's wisdom is such that they are chosen well, and each of these men is sharp, focused, stable, and mostly serves with dignity and efficiency until the day Solomon dies.

The two Chiefs of Staff, or "cabinet secretaries", under Azariah were two brothers, Elihoreph, and Ahiah, and they are referred to as "scribes", indicating that they are recorders and analysers of data. These men kept an eye on all the facts and figures from the kingdom, external and internal, and reported to Azariah these facts, so that decisions and plans could be made upon them. They were older men, and had served under David, so there was continuity in the administration, and they were able to pass their roles over to new blood later. 2 Samuel 7:17, 20:25.

Executive power was kept with the younger man who was close to Solomon, but the "wisdom factor" was left in the hands of older men who were careful enough to get all the facts required on any matter. Organisations often get rid of these older people, who quietly analyse data behind the scenes, as their older ways are not understood. Many firms eliminate the wisdom from their organisation by eliminating all the older people, and often eliminate themselves in the following five years as a result.

Jehoshaphat is referred to as the "recorder". He also had served under David as Minister of Finance. 2 Samuel 8:17, 20:24. He is, like the "scribes" in middle years, but served Solomon well through the years.

Benaiah is also a man in middle years now, mature and experienced in battle, who has both learned from, and then executed Joab. He is a man who follows orders well and has the ruthlessness that is needed in a head of the Armed Forces of the nation.

Both Zadok and Abiathar are recorded as the High Priests, and this reminds us that even though Abiathar is exiled to his home town, he retains the dignity of the High Priest until his death, even if he never serves again. His past service to David is honoured, even though he made politics his shelter, rather than trusting the Lord.

Another Azariah was in charge of the officers who obtained the provisions for the king each year to feed his army and court. He is also noted as “the king’s friend”. These men are close friends and probably close in age, as noted above. They have shared the late years of their teenage life together in the palace and Solomon trusts and loves this man.

Ahishar was in charge of the court and palace administration, and his role was to ensure that everything in the court flowed smoothly, with the food provided used properly, all officers paid on time, and all matters of protocol followed correctly.

Adoniram was in charge of collections of tribute from foreign nations, and we would call him “Foreign Minister”, as his role involved both visits to foreign courts and the following up of their annual tribute payments. Tribute was “protection money”, and the kingdoms which recognised Solomon could depend upon him to protect them in times of civil war or invasion. This may be the same man as served under David later in his reign. 2 Samuel 20:24.

Verses 7 – 19. Solomon assigned one man to each “twelfth” of the land to collect the taxes from the nation. Each man was assigned a provincial (not specifically tribal) area and had responsibility for that. The old tribal divisions were of no use for the collection of produce, for all farmed different things, and depending upon the fertility of an area would depend exactly how much produce could be collected from it. Solomon was also trying to break down the tribalism of his people and establish a more “modern” State structure. He won’t have a son to build upon this however, and his own sinful lifestyle will destroy the establishment of a great dynasty through his line. The great dynasty will be through David’s son Nathan, a nobody at this time, but by whom will come the King of kings through Mary.

David’s provincial system was refined by Solomon to meet the food and produce needs of the court. Each man was responsible for preparing his area for their annual collection. Each area was responsible for one month of each year to provide provisions for the court and army. There was a significant amount of produce to be laid aside and a great deal of local organisation to ensure the allocated amount was delivered to the Court at the right time. As these were lunar months, the times of seasons would rotate through the months allocated and so each area would have to store produce in some years, while in others they could deliver fresh produce. Each man is listed and each area for which he was responsible is noted.

The entire thing was drawn up with wisdom, but the burden upon the people was great, and after Solomon’s death the old counsellors who had administered this system pleaded with the new king to make the burden lighter in his reign, for they all knew that rebellion was just under the surface, such was the burden felt by this heavy taxation. 1 Kings 12:8-9. The last man named had the largest area and possibly had to reside there to do the work required. This is a reminder that the different areas had vastly different abilities to produce the foods required and their populations varied extensively. These men were like provincial governors.

Verses 20 – 28. The taxation was severe for all Israelites and for all tributary nations, but the benefits to them were extensive, with the peace and prosperity that only a great army and administration purchases. It would appear that the weather patterns were also very settled through this period so that productivity within the land was excellent. There was a population explosion and the people have enough to party many weeks of each year and really enjoy their lives under Solomon, in spite of the heavy taxation. The great tragedy of the reign of Rehoboam is that his arrogance creates a civil war that ends all this prosperity within five years of his taking over. Both Egypt and Philistia served Solomon all his reign, but Egypt harboured resentment and invaded the land as soon as the weakness of Solomon’s son Rehoboam was clearly visible.

The food required on a daily basis to run the administration of the kingdom was extensive. Now this fed the standing army and the administration of Solomon, and when we consider the numbers of people the requirements are standard ones and the court size is clearly not excessive. We have here the “Budget” of the kingdom on a daily basis, and most governments would find these figures significant to run any nation.

Solomon’s was one of the first truly modern and organised kingdoms, with their requirements worked out to the day and provided for in advance, so that there was little wastage in the central stores. Let us note the quantities:

1. 30 measures (Chaldean measure – a “cor”) of fine flour – about 9000 lbs, or about 4080 Kilograms. This would make enough bread for about 10,000 people where bread was the staple diet basic food.
2. 10 Fat Oxen = feed about 200+ people per oxen = 3000+.
3. 20 field oxen = feed about 100+ people per oxen = 3000+.
4. 100 sheep = feed about 2000+ people (20 people per sheep).
5. 100+ wild game birds, chickens, and deer...etc. Numbers here are not specific enough to guess at the numbers fed by these items.

The guess for the numbers to be fed each day would be around the 10,000 mark. This would cover the court and the royal guard in Jerusalem. This was not excessive given the status of the kingdom.

The writer reminds us that there was peace during Solomon’s reign throughout the region. He was able to draw upon the food supplies from Egypt to the Euphrates. All dwelt in safety throughout his reign, so the taxes were worth paying, when the benefit of peace was considered. Sadly human nature doesn’t tend to see things this way and finds excuses to reject legitimate taxation, even if it is not severe. Solomon kept the peace, and all he collected in taxation was all excess produce and initially at least, it was well spent upon a successful administration, but there were unnecessary things.....

He also had a significant armoured mobile army that was kept in specific "Chariot Cities" around the land. There is a copyist error in verse 26 with 40,000 chariots, rather than 4000 "racks for horses" = horses for about 1000 chariots. The lower figure is correct given the numbers of horses and men detailed in subsequent verses, and the parallel passages in 1 Kings 9:19, 10:26, and 2 Chronicles 1:14, 9:25.

These chariot forces were provided for by the twelve officers also, in addition to the other food stuffs. They were required to bring in hay and other horse fodder for the chariot horses and their attached soldiers and cavalry. The most likely chariot city found to date that would hold such significant forces is Hazor, the tell of which was rebuilt for chariot forces around this time. These forces were expensive (bankrupting the nation after 40 years) and **forbidden to Israelite kings** by God. It is an early sign that he is moving away from Moses' clear words from the Lord.

Deuteronomy 17:14-20. *"14. When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; 15. Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. 16. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. 17. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. 18. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: 19. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: 20. That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel."*

Verses 29 – 34. Once again we are reminded that the Lord gave Solomon the wisdom to rule well over the people and to select the right men to be his counsellors and administrators. God gave him wisdom, but in the two key areas he slowly but systematically moved away from revelation – in horses and wives. In administration however he excelled and he is a model of the best management technique – which it to select, encourage and empower the most excellent people you can find for the jobs at hand.

The greatest wisdom in the business and administrative world is that which enables a person to select the right people for a job and then give them enough space to do their work, without micro-managing them. If the Lord has given someone a gift pastor, for the Lord's sake, let them exercise that gift! Micro-management is the sign of a personality disorder on the part of the pastor-manager! Unless that manager can stop interfering in the tasking of their direct report, they ought to be relieved of their managerial responsibility. Micro-management destroys more good business (and ministries within churches) than anything other than immorality. Can you trust the Holy Spirit to lead and guide others? If not move over, or others should move you over.

The other thing that destroys good organisations is the wrong people selected for job roles. The wrong person in a role that they lack the gifting and the character, or training for, will be equally destructive, but micro-managing them will not stop the disaster! Our challenge, like Solomon's is to select the right Holy Spirit gifted people to be placed in tasks and encourage them there to walk obediently, and with self-disciplined time management to make the most of their opportunities. Solomon will be overwhelmed by many little wrong decisions, the cumulative result of which will be disastrous; each of these decisions was pride and status based.

The acknowledged "wise men" of the ancient day were the men of Egypt, and the Magi of the East. The content of the wisdom of the Magi and the Egyptian seers are only partly known today, for most of the contents of the great libraries of the ancient world that recorded their wisdom were lost in the destruction of the great library at Alexandria in the 6th century of our era. The wisdom of the Magi is partly seen in some of the thousands of cuneiform tablets unearthed and more will certainly come to light through archaeological digs in years to come. Tens of thousands of these tablets are yet to be translated. Less than 5% of the great paper/vellum/papyrus books of the ancient world survived the destruction of the armies that swept through the region burning all before them. It was only that some of the great Moslem Caliphs loved books that we have any that survived at all.

The four named men of Israel appear to be the four sons of Zerach. 1 Chronicles 2:6. We get a glimpse of their wisdom in the Psalms they wrote. Heman is the author of Psalm 88, and Ethan is the author of Psalm 89. Heman is also referred to as "the king's seer". 1 Chronicles 25:5. They back up Solomon and reinforce his wisdom with the wisdom of God through their Holy Spirit gifting also. This reminds us that no gift is meant to operate alone; even if it is a great one.

All Holy Spirit giftings will be backed up by others, and any work of a seer or prophet will be backed by another. They were Levites, sons of Korah, grand-sons of Samuel, and organisers of the great choirs of the Temple, and song and Psalm writers. We have little of their work that survives, but the two named Psalms are great songs of worship that indicate they were indeed Holy Spirit gifted men, as Solomon was at this early point. 1 Chronicles 6:18-19, 29-32, 15:17, 25:5.

Solomon's collected works were significant. He spoke 3000 proverbs, of which we have a fragmentary collection in our book of the same name. He wrote 1005 songs that were the "hit parade" of his day and were sung by people on the

street. He was also a keen student, and later a master of biological sciences and studied the trees of the land and the animals, birds and reptiles that inhabited it. In this he may have drawn upon the work of the Egyptians who were great observers of nature and recorders of natural phenomenon. Solomon was what would be called many centuries later the well rounded "Renaissance Man". In a day when egotism amongst kings made it impossible for most to give any credit at all to another man, the kings of the East came to him and were in awe of his wisdom, acknowledging that God alone could give such blessing to a man. He was great, but with a Shakespearian "tragic flaw", and like the great bard's tragic heroes – it will kill him and destroy his nation, but his descendant Joseph will have all his positive nobility.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. The right people selected for the most appropriate tasks for their abilities, is the recipe for an efficient and effective organisation. Then the challenge is to ensure that the right people are not micro-managed by the wrong supervisor. If God has given the right gifts, the pastor-teacher is challenged to manage that person in a way that enables them to grow and empowers them to serve. Our task as people managers is to so manage our people that they grow stronger and more able than we are ourselves, and that we get out of the way, and let them run with the task into the future.

2. Management in the church context means discipleship, and that means rejoicing in being replaced by the next generation, and that involves empowering them to replace you as soon as they are able. This means you keep depending upon the Lord for your next task, knowing that each ministry you leave behind is in good hands, and in the power of the Holy Spirit you can be part of establishing a new one.

3. Solomon used his wisdom and fed his mind throughout his life with new knowledge gained. He kept active mentally and physically. He mentors the use of the mind to us, for we are meant to keep learning of God's creation and God's work throughout our life. We are not to let the mind stop and be simply single focused. God's purpose for us is to be well rounded people who strive for excellence in all we do and who are hungry from more knowledge of the wonders of God's work upon this earth and in the heavens above us. A boring pastor who knows nothing outside the Bible itself is a contradiction in terms, for the Bible should stimulate a desire to know many things about what God has done. Study all things pastor, and be like Solomon, a man that draws others to you because they are impressed with your energy and openness to learn.

4. It is the dynamic combination of youth and experience that brings the greatest managerial power to bear on administrative challenges. Experience gone to seed is as dangerous as callow youth without ability or experience, but just arrogance. Rehoboam will opt for the arrogance of callow youth and pay with his kingdom. To hold onto older men who are, "past their use by date", is as dangerous as opting for youthful exuberance without ability. God will always produce a mixed cabinet for his leaders, and we are to be very scared if we confront any organisation with only old men, or only young ones!

5. The words of a prophet are subject to the prophets. 1 Corinthians 14:32. Just as Solomon's wisdom was backed up by the work of the sons of Zerach, just so each gifting of the Holy Spirit within the modern church will be backed up by another gifted person. Whenever an important work is being done by the Holy Spirit, He will bring several gifted people together through the prayers of the faithful and each will encourage the others.

NOTES

CHAPTER 5**INTRODUCTION**

One of the key requirements for the appointment of a pastor is that he is, "well spoken of in the world". 1 Timothy 3:2-7. Any believer who is not well spoken of amongst the best of unbelievers is not fit to rule within the church. If unbelievers believe a man to be unworthy, then normally he will be unworthy. Unbelievers may reject the Lord as their Saviour, but many have very high morality, and even those who do not, have a hatred of hypocrisy. Hiram the king of Tyre loved and admired David and went on to serve his son Solomon.

This man was an older king, possibly in his sixties, when Solomon began to rule and he ruled a very long time, for he was there to see the Temple completed using expert Phoenician labour and the best materials that his city-state could provide Solomon. In this chapter we see the legacy of the godly reputation of David in the total commitment of Hiram to the building of the Temple with Solomon.

1 KINGS 5:1-18

1 And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David. **2** And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, **3** Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. **4** But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent. **5** And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name. **6** Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians. **7** And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people. **8** And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir. **9** My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household. **10** So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire. **11** And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year. **12** And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together. **13** And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men. **14** And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy. **15** And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains; **16** Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work. **17** And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. **18** And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 5. Hiram is a great friend of Israel's last king David, and he hears of his death and the appointment of a new king, and immediately sends his representatives to bring condolences for the death of David, and good wishes to the new king. Solomon knows the good will of Hiram to his father, and knows that there is mutual benefit in a close alliance between the two kingdoms, for they protect the sea shore and ensure good trading routes for the produce of Israel, and Israel under David protected their borders to the south, east, and north.

The alliance between these two nations was a corner stone of Solomon's diplomacy and evangelistic outreach also, for Hiram honoured the God of Israel, for he had seen the fruit of the worship of God in the life and work of David. Solomon sends a letter straight back to Hiram, with his servants and he requests Hiram's association in the great project that he knows David acquainted him of in his final years. 2 Samuel 5:11, 1 Chronicles 17:1-7, 28:11-21.

David has gathered great quantities of stone and metal, but the timber needed to be selected and cut down fresh, and cured and prepared, ready for the building. The best loggers and lumberjacks are from Tyre and Sidon, and the best timber is in the Lebanon Mountains they control and work within. Solomon begins his request by reminding Hiram of the desire of David to build the Temple, but the Lord's over ruling of that desire. Solomon records the detail of these prophetic words in full and this indicates to me that this man is a believer, or at least an interested searcher for the truth, and that he had previously been told these things by David. The prophecy that Solomon would build the house is recorded in 2 Samuel 7:8-16.

Hiram believes that the Lord God is a God who is to be obeyed and whose words come true, and he will commit himself to the project whole heartedly. The destiny of both nations will parallel that of the Temple itself. Both nations join in building it, and when it falls, so does Sidon, and the mainland city of Tyre, and Jerusalem itself. Only the island city of Tyre lasts another 200 years, until Alexander the Great arrives, and he then destroys it totally.

Verses 6 – 12. Solomon requests that Hiram order his men to work alongside the supervisors that he will allocate to them to select and log specific trees for use in the Temple building. Each beam was selected as a tree of the proportions required. This was the ancient method of cutting trees like this, and remains so in the great Oak forests owned by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in Britain even today. A tree is specifically selected to provide wood for a specific part of the building, and then labelled as such to go to the sawmill for working.

The trees in the Oxford and Cambridge forests are even selected and shaped in their early growth up to five hundred years before they are estimated to be required. This is how it will be with the men of Hiram and Solomon; they will select trees hundreds of years old, and then float them down the rivers of Lebanon to the coast and then the logs will be rafted down to the coast to where Solomon directs, for them to be finally milled, and then the prepared beams, framing, and planks carried up to the Temple work site.

The Temple worksite itself was to be silent, without sound of hammer or chisel, and so all prefabricating work was done in out stations and the completed pieces were brought together and assembled on site by means of cranes, and tapped or pushed into position silently. All was done in a spirit of great holiness. The two kings also established a strong alliance at this time between them as kings and nations for mutual trade and military-naval benefit. This will later open up trade for the Phoenicians into the Arabian and Indian oceans.

Solomon will pay for all the servants of Hiram's who are involved in the enterprise, and provisions can be demanded by Hiram, and Solomon gives his promise that whatever is requested will be provided. This is trust in business, for it is an open cheque that Solomon gives this man, for he knows he can trust him. Hiram hears the words of Solomon and he rejoices greatly in the glorious work that he has the opportunity to be involved in. These men had a sense of destiny and history, and were aware that they were making history, and they rejoiced in being the men to build a wonder of the world.

Hiram gave/sold all the trees that Solomon's work supervisors identified were needed, and Solomon provided all that the men of Tyre required for food and payment through the entire building project. 20,000 "Cors" of wheat flour and possibly an equal amount of Olive Oil was provided to Tyre in payment for the men's time every year of the project. At around 136 lbs per Cor, if the figures are correct, this is a staggering 2,720,000 lbs of flour. This indicates that it was both food for the men, and payment into the trading empire of Tyre, that they would then use to trade with for other items. Solomon did not shrink from paying top price for the materials and men required for this project. 2 Samuel 24:23-24.

Verses 13 – 18. A levy of men was used in the forestry work, with up to 30 elephs/groups men set aside for the work, working one month on and two months off back home. This meant that the northern area tribes provided the men, who received food in exchange for their work, but were also able to return to their areas and assist with normal farm work for two months of every three. There were up to 80 elephs/groups of stone masons busy on the job also. Now once again let me remind you that the word for "thousands" is "eleph" and refers to a numbered group, so the exact figures are unknown, but were large. Don't waste time trying to match up figures between the accounts in Chronicles and here, for we haven't any way of knowing the exact numbers, and the differences may be accounted for, by comparing total numbers, as against those just in the final sorting areas close by the assembly point.

There were at least 10 logging groups working at any one time, and 80 groups of stone masons working in possibly different areas, to cut, shape and transport the prepared stones down to the building site in the Temple area. They may have quarried the stone from anywhere in the mountains of Judah and around Jerusalem. They worked with the men of Tyre on these jobs, with specific requirements for each stone and section of stonework. Vast stone friezes were carved and these are included in this description, for they were made in kit set form and assembled on site.

This was an amazing project and indicates just how "advanced" the management skills of Solomon's men were. The writer records that there were 33 "elephs" (groups) set aside as fore-men or supervisors for the work teams. This gives a ratio for the teams that is about right for manual labouring roles but remember we cannot be sure of exact numbers.

The first major role was the laying of the foundations of the Temple. As it was to be built upon a threshing floor, the ground around it needed to be raised up to the height of the floor. All threshing floors were raised above the surrounding country, and so a vast platform of stone is built around the threshing floor covering the uneven ground for as much as a hundred metres in each direction. It is a vast area that is levelled by this initial work, and upon this great platform the Temple will be built. The present platform is vast, and archaeological excavation has been limited, given the holiness of the site to Moslems and Jews, but the present Herodian structure may overlay the existing one of Solomon. Refer to the website of the Biblical Archaeological Review and type in "Temple Mount" to see the new material that is emerging year by year.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Do we rejoice in the opportunities to serve that come our way? Both Hiram and Solomon saw the temple building project as one that meant glory to God and a reputation to them that was above all else they did in their lives. These two men are still celebrated, even though the Temple they built was destroyed by other men. Let us have the

sense of destiny in all we do and do all the tasks that come our way with the wholehearted devotion that we see in these two great kings.

2. Many people are required to accomplish a great task and all need to accept direction and coordination by the supervisors that are assigned to the task. A readiness to accept orders and a determination to obey 100% is required for all who want to be part of a great undertaking. Many seek great tasks but they are not ready to devote themselves to great obedience and total energy to the task. The fame associated with a great task is not enjoyed by those who are lazy or by those unable to take robust direction and work with all their heart, and mind, and bodily strength.

3. Let us be ready to pay for all we require to do the Lord's work, and let us be ready to pay the top price without complaint. We may utilise the things that unbelievers can offer, but we must pay for them fully, for only what is "ours" may be used for the Lord's work. Let us labour to be well spoken of by unbelievers, and respected by them because we pay our bills and stand for righteousness, and are not known for hypocrisy or crooked business dealings. Let us not give the Lord that which costs us nothing. Let us be known as men and women of integrity. Genesis 23:1-20, 2 Samuel 24:24-25.

REFLECTIONS UPON TRUE AND REQUIRED CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

Christian character involves characteristics that used to be called virtues. They comprise fruits of the Holy Spirit, but also character traits that are produced over time through obedience to the Word and will of God.

Colossians 3:12-17. We are told to "put on" these things as a part of our obedient growth.

1. Bowels of mercies. Tender, compassionate affection for others; desiring their best.
2. Kindness. No ulterior motives in our kindness, other than pure desire for their good.
3. Humility. No arrogance towards others, because you see yourself as God sees you.
4. Meekness. Obedient submissiveness to the Lord's will for your life. Calm resolution.
5. Long suffering. A long burning fuse to our anger; not soon losing control.
6. Forbearing each other. Putting up with other people's foibles and differences.
7. Forgiving others. Not holding grudges, but being forgiving of other's faults.
8. Love for others as Christ loves.

NOTES

CHAPTER 6**INTRODUCTION**

Solomon began to build the house of God in the fourth year of his reign. This means he began actual construction work on site at that time, but the gathering of the equipment and materials had been going on since the earliest days of his reign and before by his father David. Before we start to look at the actual construction details let us reflect again upon Solomon's determination to build this great wonder of the ancient world.

Turn to the second book of Chronicles chapter two. We have additional details here and in the following chapters regarding the content of Solomon's letter to Hiram king of Tyre, and specific comments of spiritual aspects of the building preparation and construction. The letter contents recorded here are far fuller than those recorded in the Kings account. Remember that the priestly history of Chronicles records the perspective of the priesthood and the spiritual dimension of the political dealings.

Notice in **2 Chronicles 2:4-6**, that Solomon apparently speaks fully of the very function of the Temple services. It appears that this writer may be quoting from a copy of the letter, possibly from the royal or Temple archives. Notice the specific details Solomon gives, and the comment in verse 6, which will figure as the central doctrinal statement in his speech to open the Temple years later. **1 Kings 8:27, 2 Chronicles 6:18, Isaiah 66:1**. Also note that Hiram provided a lot more than just the lumber jacks, but also the precious metal workers and jewellers for the fine work of the Temple interior.

Now the use of these pagan workmen on the project raises some questions, and also answers some questions for modern church builders. Many think that we can only use Christians to build things for the local church, and while that is preferable, it is not necessary, for a building is sanctified by its dedication and its use, not by its builders. Notice also the answer of Hiram to Solomon, and note that the writer of Chronicles records that this was "in writing", and this to me is the final piece of evidence that these letters were extant when the writer recorded the details.

The key co-ordinator of Hiram's team is the son of a Tyrian father and an Israelite mother from the tribe of Dan, who has learned his craft in Tyre. This man appears to be a specialist palace builder from his skill set. **2 Chronicles 2:14-15**. In this passage we also have the port for the arrival of timber given as Joppa. **2 Chronicles 2:16**.

The foundation work begins on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of Solomon's reign. Read the chapter before us now and get an overall impression of the Temple, and then read chapter three of 2 Chronicles, which forms the parallel account. Let the impression sink in. What is the dominant impression you have? Is it not the gold of the walls, the floor and the cherubim? The entire structure would have glowed with gold. The floors were overlaid with gold, as were the walls and everything within the Temple was gold.

This was unlike anything ever seen before in the ancient world for richness of gold in its sanctuary. It is a testimony of the wealth of this kingdom that there was so much gold here to lavish on this building. Turn back to Exodus 36-38 and re-read that section on the old tabernacle. Note especially Exodus 38:24-25, and see the amount of gold and silver used on that structure, and then think about the amount of gold and silver used in this Temple.

It became a magnet for conquerors and would be looted thoroughly by a succession of invaders. The Egyptians seize the city within five years of Solomon's death and take all the moveable treasure, but appear to leave the Temple intact, but loot its treasury and possibly peel the gold off the roof and floors. The Assyrians later demand tribute and it is paid possibly by scraping some of the remaining gold off the floors and walls. Finally the Babylonians in 586BC complete the looting process, with all the gold that was left pulled from the walls and floors before the beautiful wooden panelling was used to burn it, and then battering rams were used to smash it to the ground so that the surrounding valleys were filled of rubble. **2 Kings 25:8-21, Nehemiah 2:11-15**.

All the glory of man's building is just food for lust filled men in the end, and the Temple of the heart is alone the place where the gold that doesn't perish rests. **Matthew 6:19-21, 19:21**. The Lord wanted His people to put their best into their worship, but not to worship the building, but sadly the fixation upon the building will become idolatry later in Israel's history. Later generations considered the building a "good luck charm", and believed falsely that God would not destroy His Temple, even if they worshipped pagan gods within it. Even this evil will be practised later by Manasseh, and by Zedekiah. **2 Chronicles 36:14-21, Jeremiah 7:1-15, 26:6-9, 41:5, Ezekiel 8:1ff**.

1 KINGS 6:1-38

1 And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD. 2 And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits. 3 And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house. 4 And for the house he made windows of narrow lights. 5 And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house

round about, both of the temple and of the oracle: and he made chambers round about: 6 The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad: for without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house. 7 And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building. 8 The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third. 9 So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar. 10 And then he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar. 11 And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying, 12 Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father: 13 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel. 14 So Solomon built the house, and finished it. 15 And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir. 16 And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built them for it within, even for the oracle, even for the most holy place. 17 And the house, that is, the temple before it, was forty cubits long. 18 And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen. 19 And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD. 20 And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar. 21 So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold. 22 And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold. 23 And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high. 24 And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits. 25 And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size. 26 The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub. 27 And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. 28 And he overlaid the cherubims with gold. 29 And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without. 30 And the floors of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without. 31 And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree: the lintel and side posts were a fifth part of the wall. 32 The two doors also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees. 33 So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall. 34 And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. 35 And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work. 36 And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams. 37 In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif: 38 And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

REFLECTIONS

Verse 1. The actual date for the beginning of the Temple construction is given to us with precision. Now this precision assists you if you are an astronomer and mathematician, but not if you are a simple student of the scriptures. Don't get too obsessive about getting the dates "right" here, for our modern calendar is an invention of Julius Caesar, modified several centuries later by Pope Gregory the Great. Our calendar is a solar one, with solar years, whereas the ancient Israelites, as the modern Islamic world, followed a lunar calendar, and so precision is a matter of calculations that few are competent to do, but arrogant fools abound who speculate.....

Four hundred and eighty lunar years (of 336 days) approximates 442 solar years, so the building begins around the year 1000 BC. The value of these figures is that it does fix the Exodus at around the year 1445 BC rather than any later date. The Septuagint, Greek translation, of the Old Testament, made in the third century BC, records the figure as 440, using the approximate Solar year calculation. Refer back to the Commentary on the Life of Moses (Exodus) for discussion of the dates and pharaohs of the Exodus time.

The actual site of the Holy of Holies of the Temple is referred to as "Mt Moriah". 2 Chronicles 3:1. It was so well known at the time of the writer, as the Temple was either still there, or its ruins were, so as not to necessitate any further discussion or description of the site. We are at a loss however, and must guess or accept traditions that are much later.

The Dome of the Rock is placed over a rocky hill top that is believed to be the place called Moriah. This was believed to be the site of Abraham's offering up of Isaac. Genesis 22:1-3. It was also believed to be the same place where the angel paused in his judgement, and David worshipped. This mountain top was believed to be the threshing floor of Ornan/Araunah. 2 Samuel 24:19-25. It may indeed be that place, or it may be that the mountain top where the threshing floor existed was further to the north of the two mosques that are presently there. Ground penetrating radar will answer this question, and may already have answered it, but the political and religious implications of the facts are so great that little is publicly known certainly at this point, in the first days of 2022. It will not be long before the truth is fully known.

It is difficult to see the topography of the land under the great platform that covers the site today. This platform dates from the time of Herod the Great, who rebuilt the second Temple on the site. Solomon built the first platform here to establish his Temple, and it is under the present one, but it has been modified significantly over the last 3000 years. Do an internet search of "Temple Mount" and you will see just how much speculation there is about this area of real estate. The one certainty we have is that there will be a third temple built on this range of hills and it will be operating with Arab support when the Tribulation Period begins. We do have God's Word on this in several places..... Refer book 121 – "Rediscovering the Faith of their Fathers" – (the Arab nations in the last days).

My guess is that the actual site of Solomon's Temple is further north than the present mosques, and that the Holy of Holies was originally below the small cupola due east of the Golden Gate called the "Cupola of Moses". The later psalmist, in Psalms 121:1-2, states that he "looked up to the hills, from where my help comes; my help comes from the Lord". This is a reminder that the old city of David was lower than the Temple site and from the citadel wall a king or guard would look up to the mountain tops (plural) to the north, upon one of which was Solomon's Temple.

Verses 2 – 10. The actual dimensions of the Temple building itself are not great. The building itself measured 60 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high. The actual temple could fit inside most church auditoriums. Debate centres around even the precise length of a cubit at this time, but approximately the biblical cubit was 18 inches long, which is just under half a metre. The approximate dimensions of the building itself were then about 30 metres long, 10 metres wide, and 15 metres high. The Temple of Solomon would fit inside most modern church auditoriums. Compare this to the old Tabernacle of Moses, which was, 15 metres long, 4.5 metres wide and 5 metres high. Exodus 37:20-34. It is not simply twice as big, for it is made three times as high.

David passed the drawings he had drawn up on to Solomon for the Temple, and so great thought went into it over a long time, but we are not told where David received the plans. It is not stated that he received the plans from a vision of the Lord, as Moses had for the Tabernacle. Exodus 25:1-9, 40, Numbers 8:4, 1 Chronicles 28:11-13. The pattern for the items within the new Temple will be copied from those in the tabernacle, but there will be more of them, or they will be larger. Solomon will also add some entirely new things in his Temple.

The total Temple building was larger than the basic measurements due to the addition on the outside walls of storage rooms for all that was required in the worship. The descriptions here and in Chronicles are not 100% helpful, for they are given by those who have seen the building, and so they are almost shorthand, and so for us it is guess work to get the building really clear in our minds. There was also a raised porch in front of the Temple that jutted out from the front wall of the Temple five metres.

The Tabernacle of Moses had no windows, the only light being given by the golden lampstand, but Solomon's Temple had a number of high narrow windows to let the light in, smoke out, but keep birds out. This meant that the interior of the building would glow in the light of the sun as it shone through the narrow windows. They were very narrow so that incense and smoke would leave the building through them, but no birds would have been able to fly in through them.

Notice in verse 7 that no tools of iron were to be used on the actual site and make any noise. The entire structure was kit set built and slid or craned into position, with hard wood "nails" used to fasten the timbers together. This was the traditional building method for thousands of years before and even after the invention of iron.

The measurements of the various storage rooms are given, and there were three different widths, of 5, 6, and 7 cubits. The belief of most is that these rooms were stacked three stories high and that each story was one cubit more narrow than the one beneath it. This cubit difference might also allow for a walkway around the two lower stories, giving access into each storage room. We simply cannot know for sure, although the spiral staircase on the right side of the Temple is described, by means of which the priests gained access to each of the two upper levels of storage chambers.

Herod's Temple is described more fully by Josephus, who saw it functioning, and saw the Roman's destroy it in 70AD. (Josephus – Wars of the Jews – Book 5, Chapter 5). While this is a great eye witness account of the second temple it doesn't help us identify the actual structure of the first one, as it was built 1000 years beforehand and so thoroughly destroyed that the Exiles who returned needed to start from scratch. Ezra 5:1-4, 6:14-18.

The attachment of the chambers to the Temple walls was by means of cedar beams and these buildings appear to be panelled, or possibly made of cedar wood. It may be that the walkway around the building at each of the two upper levels was covered in, and projected out beyond the stone walls of the structure to enable priests to walk along it without being seen, and by extending the width of the walkway by a wooden deck and outer wall providing protection against falling off the ledge when bringing items to and from the rooms.

The entire structure of the Temple may have been overlaid with cedar weather boards and a cedar roof to protect it from the elements. Most "artist's impressions" show a visible stone structure, but the indication is that it was covered in panelled cedar and possibly had a gold leaf waterproof covering. The stone work was covered in cedar in side and then the wood was covered in gold, so inside very little stone work was visible at all. It may be that outside the Temple was the same, with timber covering the stone "bones" of the building, and then the entire structure overlaid with gold. All is interesting speculation, so don't argue with people over descriptions of Solomon's Temple for no-one alive today knows, and the last men who knew what it looked like died around the year 520BC and they moaned that the second temple of Zerubbabel (which Herod rebuilt) was not a patch on the one that was destroyed in 586BC. Zechariah 4:8-10.

Verses 11 – 13. God's promise comes to Solomon as he builds the Temple. God speaks with us as we are actively obeying not before we start to obey. Solomon has begun the work and several years into the task of gathering material the Lord encourages him.

This has been the pattern of my own life and often the Lord has waited until I have been working away at the required project for a few years before full confirmation of it comes. The Lord stretches our faith, and that is neither mean nor unfair, but strengthening. The Lord's promise to Solomon is a conditional covenant. The kingdom, the Temple, and Solomon himself will be blessed if there is obedience to the Mosaic Law, but there will be judgement if they are not obedient, exactly as was spelt out to the Generation that seized the land four hundred years before. Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 27-28.

The promise of the Lord to King David was a specific one of blessing to the line of David, and it would flow through Solomon, if and only if, there was obedience on his part. 2 Samuel 7:8-16. God's promise was that as long as they did not forsake His ways then He would not forsake His people. Sadly both Solomon and the people will be judged in accordance with these very words. Solomon's line will be corrupt and will end with Jeconiah, whose descendent is Joseph, the human step-father of the humanity of the Lord, but not his biological father. If Jesus was born of Solomon's line he was disqualified under these words, for Solomon's line loses its rulership due to their consistent disobedience to the Lord and corruption of all sorts. Jeremiah 22:22-30, Matthew 1:7-11.

It is the descendents of Nathan, another son of David, who is the father of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, through Mary his mother. This promise here to Solomon is a reason why the Virgin Birth had to occur, for no son of Solomon can ever sit on the throne of Messiah. The wisest man ever to live will fall short of the requirements for lasting blessing. He will fall short of the standard of God, just as we all have. Psalms 95:7-11, Romans 3:9-20, 23, Hebrews 3:7 – 4:5.

There is a promise here however that has never been broken, and that was that the Lord would not forsake His people Israel; even if the majority turned away from Him. The Jewish people have not been forsaken, for a remnant has always been kept alive and they will remain so until the end of time, and welcome their Messiah to rule over Jerusalem. Zechariah 12:10-14, 13:6ff. Isaiah 1:9, 10:19-22, 11:1-16, Jeremiah 23:3, 31:7, 40:11-15, 44:12-28, Ezekiel 6:8, 14:22.

When a great historian was asked for a miracle, he simply pointed to a passing Jew, for he noted that their survival proves the existence of their God like no other miracle of history. Given the consistent malice of Satan's attack upon the Jewish people it is a miracle that any have lived. Just as the Old Testament people of God are not forsaken, neither are we, even when we fail. Let us remember that our God is a forgiving God of grace and mercy. 2 Timothy 2:12-13.

Verses 14 – 22. The entire structure within was panelled and floored with cedar or fir/cypress. The floor and ceiling was panelled fir/cypress planking, and the walls were of cedar panels. The Holy of Holies was made into a perfect cube by a suspended ceiling and the wall panelling, so that there was a ceiling space of ten cubits above the chamber. This may have been a void space or had some use. No mention is made of any purpose for this upper chamber, although it may have had one that was known only to the High Priest and his closest associates.

The cedar panelling was cut to the right lengths and carved off site with rows of beautifully made open and closed flower buds; the open flowers ready for pollination and the closed bud full of seed after pollination. Having said this, it is only a guess from the words used and as this Temple has not survived we can only guess at this decoration. The Chronicles account, and verses 29ff below, also tell us that carved cherubim, and palm trees, were part of the decoration of the carved walls, and that a fully carved pair of palm trees formed the decoration at either end of the walls of the Holy Place connecting to the wall of the Holy of Holies. Herod's Temple used these and also different motifs, favouring the palm trees, pomegranates, and grape vines.

The whole house was panelled, and it would appear, both inside and outside, and then gold was laid over the wood and pressed/glued onto the wood. 2 Chronicles 3:5-9. From the comment in verse 18, it would appear that no stone work was visible from either outside or inside the building, and that indicates that the entire structure may have been overlaid with cedar and gold; certainly the entire inside was. This makes quite a difference to the white Jerusalem stone type pictures that most artists have drawn of this structure, for rather than being white in the sun, it would have had a permanent golden glow to it.

The altar mentioned here may be an additional stone altar, panelled with cedar and overlaid with gold, within the Holy of Holies, or it may be the replacement altar of incense that stood by the partition wall between the two chambers, but in the first chamber, the Holy Place. It is not clear 100%, for with the two great carved cherubim in the Holy of Holies there would be room for another altar under their wings standing before the ark, and it may be that this altar was used for the sprinkling of the blood, with the ark being left as the "throne of God" looking on to the altar between the two giant cherubim. We cannot be sure, but this explanation is the one I suspect is correct.

Verses 23 – 28. These two large carved figures of cherubim, each carved from a separate olive tree, were an addition to the Temple of Solomon that was not part of the Tabernacle of Moses. Cherubim were the angels of the presence of God and surrounded the presence of God, and so they feature greatly in the decoration of the walls, and were also woven into the veil that overlaid the stone and panelled wall between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. If the altar mentioned in verse 20 is indeed within the Holy of Holies (the "oracle" in some translations, for it was the place from where God spoke), then the two cherubim formed a very large replica of the "Mercy Seat" of the ark itself. As noted

above, it may be that the altar between the cherubim was used as the place for sacrificial blood to be sprinkled, with as it were, the presence of the Lord above the position of the old mercy seat of the ark looking on.

The symbolism of the two carved cherubim here is identical to the lid of the ark, as they stand for the Justice and Righteousness of God being satisfied by the blood sacrifice being sprinkled between them. (The Doctrine of Propitiation.) These two carved statues are an enormous visual representation of the doctrine of propitiation.

These two cherubim were enormous, and would have dominated the inner chamber. The two cherubim and the new altar thus form an enormous replica of the old mercy seat of the Ark and make it the focal point of the Holy of Holies, with the old Ark facing it. It is believed that the lid of the old Ark was either destroyed, or damaged in some way during its time held captive by the Philistines, or its years in hiding. The original two carved cherubim were solid gold and would be the two items most likely immediately removed from the Ark by the Philistines and melted down. Exodus 37:6-8. This may be why they used solid gold to send the votive offerings back. My suspicion is that it was the gold that came from the cherubim. 1 Samuel 4:11, 5:1, 6:1-9. Refer back to the commentaries on these chapters for full discussion of this.

If the original cherubim on the Ark's lid had been damaged or taken and melted down by the Philistines, this would explain more fully why Solomon duplicated the symbolism of the lid of the Ark in the Holy of Holies of the Temple. This would certainly explain why Solomon felt that he needed a larger version of what had been on the original lid of the Ark for the blood to be sprinkled upon. The new "Mercy Seat" was indeed the focal point of the inner chamber, for everything that happened in the sacrificial system found its meaning in the Mercy Seat.

Verses 29 – 38. The carving on the cedar panels was intricate and overlaid with gold, but it may be that within the Holy of Holies the decoration was simpler, but that outside it had the palm trees and cherubim in addition to the open flowers. This is my suggestion only, and remember all these observations are suggestions only, for no-one drew a picture that has lasted the 3000 years since this amazing building was completed.

From the outside the temple glowed with gold and upon this field of gold the embossed angelic beings would have appeared to fly around the entire building amongst the symbols of prosperity (open flowers and palm trees). The symbolism was simple and powerful; this was God's house and the angels of His presence kept the place, and agricultural prosperity for the nation depended upon the presence of the Lord amongst them.

The floors of both rooms of the temple were overlaid with beaten gold. The entry into the Holy of Holies was by means of a door made of olive wood at the centre of the partition stone wall. The stone wall was overlaid with cedar panelling and then with gold, and then the entire wall will be covered with a veil, as in the old tabernacle. Exodus 35:36-38. The curtain hung in sections and through one of these meeting points in the curtains the door was able to be accessed.

There were two doors and they opened inwards to the Holy of Holies. They were carved off site with cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid with gold. It appears also that additional gold was overlaid on the carvings of the cherubim and the palm trees to make them stand out even more from the gold background. Different coloured gold may also have been used here to emphasise these carvings in the wood beneath.

The doors and lintels for the door took up a fifth of the partition wall; that is, it was four cubits wide, around six feet, or two metres. All the gold on the panelling and doors of this partition wall will be hidden by the veil or curtain that will hang over it. Why go to so much trouble for something that will be seen only by selected members of the priesthood daily, and fully by High Priest only, and then only once a year? It is a reminder that the Lord sees all things, and this building was made for the glory of God, and so every detail was important, and every detail was got right.

The actual door of the Temple, giving entry into the first chamber, the Holy Place, took up a quarter of the front wall facing the courtyard. The width of these twin doors was then five cubits, or around 7 feet six inches, or around two and a half metres. Remember, all these measurements are guess work as we do not know precisely what cubit measure was used for the building. The front doors were made of fir/cypress wood. They were bi-fold doors in four sections, with each door in two sections and folding into the other.

It appears that these doors had gold pressed/inlaid onto the carved work only, so that the gold stood out against the natural wood. The same motif was used of palm trees, flower and cherubim. These doors when opened, would give a glimpse into the Holy Place and the glow of gold must have made the entrance shine. The mix of wood and gold on these doors formed a strong contrast to the inner golden glowing first chamber, which made the interior more wonderful to glimpse behind them.

The description of the "inner court" is now given. Most commentators record this as if it is the Court of the Priests, but that makes no sense, for it was not a covered area, and it was far larger than three hewn stones in width. I therefore take the reference of verse 36 to be the Temple porch. As we have gone from the inner chamber to the outer chamber it is logical that we move to the porch next. This makes sense also from a size perspective, with three rows of hewn stones forming the floor, and cedar beams holding up the panelled ceiling over the porch.

From the earlier verses I take it that the ceiling had gold overlaid upon it, although the floor appears to be left as hewn stones, with the gold covering beginning at the wooden floor of the Holy Place; the white Jerusalem stone of the porch giving way to the golden floor of the Holy Place at the door, then the complete golden room of the Holy of Holies.

The entire building work to assemble the giant "kit set" on the site took seven years. The stone, wood and gold format for the Temple is a perfect picture of the stability of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His Hypostatic Union (that He was perfect humanity (wood) and perfect Deity (gold) in perfect unity).

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Solomon starts the project and works steadily, with focused energy and stamina and finishes it several years later. He does not slack in his attention to detail, and his instructions are clear and thorough. How careful are we in the projects we undertake for the Lord? Are we fit enough to handle the pressures that will come? Are we ready to handle the stressors that will be a part of the battles in the ANGELIC CONFLICT that is at the heart of all work for the Lord?
2. Give thanks today for the "remnant" concept of scripture. The Lord has preserved His people through history, and He will preserve us in the midst of whatever the Devil throws at us. We have an amazing God who delivers us from all adversity and preserves us from the midst of troubles. Let us claim that power and love today.
3. The Temple itself was a wonderful picture of the perfection of the person and work of the coming Messiah, the Christ. It portrayed His perfect humanity and deity in union to work out the sin bearing and salvation for all mankind. This building was a visible reminder of the person and work of God for man. Even the hidden parts of this building were made perfectly, for every aspect of the character and work of God for us is perfect. Let us put our whole heart into all our service, for anything less than our very best is unacceptable as a thanks offering to God who gave His all for us.

REFLECTION UPON THE DANGER OF IDOLATRY

1. Idolatry is forbidden (Exodus 20:3,4,23; 23:24; Deuteronomy 4:28; 5:7; 6:14; 7:16; 8:19).
2. In the Ten Commandments, the first commandment prohibits mental idolatry, the second commandment prohibits overt idolatry. Worship of any "thing" as important is forbidden, for things are to be used for the glory of the Lord.
3. Idolatry is spiritual adultery, an attack on the believer's love towards God (Jeremiah 3:8-10; Ezekiel 16:23-43; 23:24-30; Revelation 17:1-5).
4. Idolatry of mind precedes idolatry of practice. Mental idolatry occurs before overt idolatry. (Judges 2:10-13; Ezekiel 14:7).
5. Idolatry occurs when the creation, rather than the Creator, is worshipped. (Romans 1:18-25).
6. Demons function through idols and practices of idolatry. (Zechariah 10:2).
7. Idolatry is the devil's communion table. (1 Corinthians 10:19-21).
8. Idolatry is related to sexual sins under the phallic cult. (Ezekiel 22:3-18; 23:37-49). Consequently idolatry has an adverse effect on both soul and body. (1 Corinthians 6:9).
9. Idolatry causes the national judgement of destruction and enslavement (Isaiah 2:8; 2:18-20; 21:9; 36:18-20; Jeremiah 2:27:30; 3:6-11; 7:17-20; 17:1-4; Ezekiel 6:4-6).

REFLECTION UPON CHRISTIAN GIVING

1. Giving is an important part of spiritual life. It includes your attitude, the giving of yourself, your capacity as well as your possessions. Giving is as much a part of worship as praying, singing, listening to teaching, observing the Lord's Table, reading the Word. It is a function of priesthood for team work and often to sustain the work of leadership.
2. Basic Principles of Giving
 - (a) Old Testament Giving - this giving was grace giving just as it is in our age. (Proverbs 11:24,25)
 - (b) New Testament Giving - (2 Corinthians 9:7) also grace giving.
 - (c) Tithing - this means ten per cent. It was a form of income tax in Israel. Offerings or giving were above this. Tithing was for all Jews, offerings for believers only. It should be remembered that Israel was a theocracy.
 - [i] In Israel two tithes were required annually
 - [ii] Tithes 1 - for the maintenance of the Levites (Numbers 18:21, 24) Civil servants in a theocracy.
 - [iii] Tithes 2 - for national feasts and sacrifices (Deuteronomy 14:22-26)
 - [iv] Every third year a third tithe was required:-

[v] Tithes 3 - for the poor of the land. (Deuteronomy 14:28, 29) Social security. In (Malachi 3:8-10) it mentions tithes and offerings, the tithes to be brought to the storehouse or treasury.

(d) The time to give - the first day of the week. (1 Corinthians 16:2)

(e) How much - as God has prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2)

3. General Scripture on Giving. (2 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9)

(a) 2 Corinthians 8:1-8. Contrasts the Macedonian givers to the Corinthian givers, the former having been made poor by Roman oppression gave liberally. The Corinthians, the richest Church in Greece, gave sparingly.

(b) Giving is an attitude of grace and inner happiness rather than compulsion or the amount donated (2 Corinthians 8:2)

(c) Before money is given you must give yourself. (2 Corinthians 8:5)

(d) Giving is as important an act as any other act in the fellowship. (2 Corinthians 8:7)

(e) Giving is love giving not law giving (2 Corinthians 8:8)

(f) Giving depends on being oriented to grace, the prime example being the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

(g) Money given in the Lord's service must be properly administered. (2 Corinthians 8:19-21)

(h) If you give in grace you reap bountifully. If you give in legalism or with strings you reap sparingly. (2 Corinthians 9:6)

(i) How to give. Giving is a reflection of your character, by grace not habit. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

(j) God has given unto us his unspeakable Gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15, 1 Peter 2:24)

(k) Giving should be regular. 1 Corinthians 16:2.

(m) As we are prospered so we give: God provides the capital with which to give. 2 Corinthians 9:7-10.

(n) Mature believers are most effective givers. 2 Corinthians 9:10. Generosity of mind leads to generous giving. 2 Corinthians 9:11. Philippians 4:14-18.

(o) The pastor's logistical support comes from giving: He makes an issue out of the word never money, if he does his job God will provide the money. Pastor provides spiritual food and receives money for physical needs. Mutual blessing is thus assured, as the people show their appreciation for the ministry of the word. 2 Corinthians 11:7-9, Philippians 1:3-5, 4:10, 4:14.

Notes

CHAPTER 7**INTRODUCTION**

The magnificence of the Temple building itself was amazing, but some of the cast bronze work associated with this building were some of the greatest feats of metal casting until recent times, indeed some would argue that our chances today of doing what Solomon did here are slim. The sheer weight of the bronze used to make the objects within the Temple was staggering, and the ability to smelt this much metal, and then pour it simultaneously into moulds, and then have the entire structure hold together without uneven cooling; this is simply amazing.

Let the descriptions here overwhelm you, for that would have been the impression upon all who saw the details of this Temple, but then look up and be overwhelmed by the God in whose honour this building was built. As we go through I will try to give an idea of the weight of some of the objects described and the cranes of today would have difficulty with these objects, and yet Solomon's men were such experts that they were able to assemble these items on site and do so without the sound of a metal hammer.

We get a glimpse in this chapter also of the extensive palace building work Solomon undertook and the on-going archaeological challenge is to identify where the palace of Solomon actually was. I personally believe it lies somewhere under the buildings to the north/north-west of the Temple Mount area, well to the north-west of the "City of David", but it is just another significant building that is well buried by the buildings of the next 3000 years.

Over all the building work described here, write the words, "this too shall pass", and remember that all that out lasts time is the work we do for the Lord, not the buildings we make. **Matthew 24:35, James 1:9-11, 1 Peter 1:17, 2 Peter 3:10-13.**

Let us not be too focused upon bricks, mortar, stone and wooden panelling, but upon the things built by the Holy Spirit into the lives of the men we work amongst. Solomon himself saw this very clearly. Psalms 127:1, Ecclesiastes 1:3-9, 2:9-11, 8:15-17, 12:1-13, John 6:27, 1 Corinthians 15:58.

1 KINGS 7:1-51

1 But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house. **2** He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof was an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars. **3** And it was covered with cedar above upon the beams, that lay on forty five pillars, fifteen in a row. **4** And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light in three ranks. **5** And all the doors and posts were square, with the windows: and light was against light in three ranks. **6** And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof was fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch was before them: and the other pillars and the thick beam were before them. **7** Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, even the porch of judgment: and it was covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other. **8** And his house where he dwelt had another court within the porch, which was of the like work. Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife, like unto this porch. **9** All these were of costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside toward the great court. **10** And the foundation was of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits. **11** And above were costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars. **12** And the great court round about was with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of the LORD, and for the porch of the house. **13** And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. **14** He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work. **15** For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about. **16** And he made two chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapter was five cubits: **17** And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter. **18** And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter. **19** And the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits. **20** And the chapiters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter. **21** And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz. **22** And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished. **23** And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. **24** And under the brim of it round about there were knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knops were cast in two rows, when it was cast. **25** It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward. **26** And it was an hand breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained two thousand baths. **27** And he

made ten bases of brass; four cubits was the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof, and three cubits the height of it. 28 And the work of the bases was on this manner: they had borders, and the borders were between the ledges: 29 And on the borders that were between the ledges were lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges there was a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions made of thin work. 30 And every base had four brasen wheels, and plates of brass: and the four corners thereof had undersetters: under the laver were undersetters molten, at the side of every addition. 31 And the mouth of it within the chapter and above was a cubit: but the mouth thereof was round after the work of the base, a cubit and an half: and also upon the mouth of it were gravings with their borders, foursquare, not round. 32 And under the borders were four wheels; and the axletrees of the wheels were joined to the base: and the height of a wheel was a cubit and half a cubit. 33 And the work of the wheels was like the work of a chariot wheel: their axletrees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, were all molten. 34 And there were four undersetters to the four corners of one base: and the undersetters were of the very base itself. 35 And in the top of the base was there a round compass of half a cubit high: and on the top of the base the ledges thereof and the borders thereof were of the same. 36 For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he graved cherubims, lions, and palm trees, according to the proportion of every one, and additions round about. 37 After this manner he made the ten bases: all of them had one casting, one measure, and one size. 38 Then made he ten lavers of brass: one laver contained forty baths: and every laver was four cubits: and upon every one of the ten bases one laver. 39 And he put five bases on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house: and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward over against the south. 40 And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basons. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the LORD: 41 The two pillars, and the two bowls of the chapters that were on the top of the two pillars; and the two networks, to cover the two bowls of the chapters which were upon the top of the pillars; 42 And four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, even two rows of pomegranates for one network, to cover the two bowls of the chapters that were upon the pillars; 43 And the ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases; 44 And one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea; 45 And the pots, and the shovels, and the basons: and all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the LORD, were of bright brass. 46 In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan. 47 And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass found out. 48 And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the shewbread was, 49 And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold, 50 And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple. 51 So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the LORD.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 12. The way the royal palace and the associate buildings, porches, and covered walk ways between them are described, all indicates to me that they were all in the same basic area as the Temple itself. The area to the north of the old City of David was available for building, as it was the area of the threshing floors of the day. It is this area, now covered by the vast Temple platform, built by Herod the Great that I believe is the area where the complex of palace and Temple were built. Herod simply rebuilt Solomon's levelling platform over the various hill tops that were previously there. This viewpoint is just my thoughts, and I won't argue with you if you have a different viewpoint, as we cannot know this 100%, but my suspicion is that Solomon would have wanted his palace to connect to the temple complex, as the early Israelite kings had.

Later kings certainly had covered ways built directly from their palace to the northern, or possibly the western part of the temple area, so the evidence is that the two great buildings of Solomon's day were together in this area. 2 Kings 11:9-16, 2 Chronicles 23:12-15. Notice how long he spent building his palace, in relation to the Temple, but this may be because the palace took second place for the first seven years. I don't believe the palace was more magnificent than the Temple, but it was many times as large and may have covered an area that enveloped the northern and western walls of the temple complex covering the hills to the north and the western hill of the present city. It may have required significant levelling work, almost the building of a stone platform upon which the palace sat as a citadel in itself.

The descriptions of the buildings within the palace complex have great interest to the archaeologists and architects for they give us a great description of how the roof was held up, and the number of sets/rows of columns in a building of the size described. The great building called "the Forest of Lebanon", for its amazing timber framing and panelling was about 150 feet long (50 metres), 75 feet wide (25 metres), and 45 feet (15 metres) high. If the measurements here are correct, this has a floor area of around 11,250 square feet (1250 square metres). To hold this structure up there were four rows of 15 cedar pillars holding up cedar beams to which the panelled ceiling was attached. There is no-where on the Ophel where such a building would fit, but royal buildings this size are not unknown in the ancient world.

This is an amazing building in which several hundred courtiers could meet Solomon and great State functions could be held. There simply isn't space in the old city of David or upon the Ophel for two such buildings as are described here and my belief is that it may have covered the area around the present ruins of the Fortress of Antonia, and stretching around towards the western hill, or be totally on the western hill. There were covered porches for courtiers and family to walk between the various parts of the Palace and enter into the Temple under cover from the elements. The centre of the city

of Jerusalem shifts to the north as a result of this building project and the old city of David likely becomes a garrison place and courtiers accommodation only.

The great throne room was another vast panelled hall, possibly as long as the Forests of Lebanon building and possibly joined to it. The princess of Egypt had her own annex to the Palace and it appears she was the senior queen of the nation. Each of the walls of these vast buildings was formed of great hewn limestone blocks that were sawed into great blocks of ten cubits (15 feet long – nearly 5 metres), or eight cubits (12 feet long – 4 metres). These are seriously large blocks and had to be craned/rolled into position to form the foundations of the walls and buildings. This makes it easy for the archaeologist, for any stones of these dimensions, without Herod's tell tale edging, tell them that they have possibly found Solomon's foundations.

The courtyard around the palace area, possibly between it and the Temple precinct was three hewn stones width, but we don't know what length of stone, but this information gives us a minimum courtyard of at least 36 feet or 12 metres between the buildings of the palace and the outer wall of the Temple. This is a seriously large palace area, with open spaces between buildings, and will have several thousand people living within its outer walls. The city of Solomon is far larger than most older Bible maps indicate!

Verses 13 – 22. These two pillars/columns will stand for four hundred years at the entrance of the Temple, their bronze shining in the early morning sunlight. They will be so valuable for their weight in bronze that the Babylonians will cut/break them into pieces when they destroy the Temple and carry them away to Babylon in sections for re-smelting. 2 Kings 25:13-17, Jeremiah 52:17-23.

The man who was in charge of casting the bronze work for the Temple was named Hiram. 2 Chronicles 2:11-16. The parallel passage records his mother's people as being from Dan, but our passage from Naphtali. Which is it? There is one likely explanation. It may be that his mother had parents from both tribes, and the writers are keen that both are noted, and so the writer writing the second account records the other tribe that claims this man as their "son". Our passage also records that his mother was a widow. My belief is that the Chronicles account is the latter one and adds/corrects details, so putting the two accounts together we have the grand-parents of this man being from the two tribes noted, and his father from Tyre, where he learned his trade. He was an expert in his field, especially in the casting of Bronze.

Most bronze was cast relatively thinly (at around or less than 25-50 mm depth) and is designed to wrap around a wooden or stone pillar to form the decorated column. It was fitted together like a kit-set, so that the individual pieces of the sculpture were not too heavy to manoeuvre. The entire structure was designed to be held together by its own weight pressing in on the stone or wooden pillar beneath it, and bronze pins from the same casting lot were used to bind it together. These pin holes may still be seen in some of the bronze statues that have survived from the Greco-Roman period in the great museums. The way these statues and pillars were cast is still studied by artists today and many of the same methods are still used, and few of these ancient pieces have been surpassed. These builders were genius in their design and build.

This man Hiram, named for the king, as many were in this time, was a man like Solomon, a genius in the metal arts, uniquely gifted in casting of bronze and other metals. This man had to develop a method of casting not just the columns, for this was well known, but the bronze laver for the Temple was enormous and a challenge for any smelting business. He will build a special smelter in the Jordan Valley to achieve these things with a vast area required to ensure the castings were done using the charcoal fires from the forests in that region to ensure the smelters had the quantities of molten metal available in the quantities required.

From the descriptions of the work it appears he had a number of smelters arranged in a circle with the castings done in the centre so that the molten metal arrived into the mould(s) simultaneously. These were nearly all large items and only the largest metal works would be able to do this work today. It is also most likely that these items were designed in pieces to be smelted separately and assembled on site.

The two great columns in front of the Temple were eighteen cubits high. This is over 27 feet, or over 8.2 metres high. Their circumference at the base was eleven cubits = 16 feet 6 inches, or 7.8 metres. These were very large and squat columns that would have caught the sun light like giant fat reflectors. 2 Chronicles 3:15 records them as being 35 cubits, but this is likely the measurement of both lying end to end. This still leaves us half a cubit short on each to reach the eighteen cubit length for each. The "missing" half cubit is I suspect the base for the "chapter" of brass that sat on top of each column. These appear to be a cast band of a crisscross network of seven lines and chains (verse 17). These cast bronze "chapter" pieces were ornate works that projected 5 cubits (7 ½ feet, or 2.3 metres) beyond the top of the band at the top of the columns. They were cast with the forms of pomegranates, two hundred on each chapter.

On the top of the walls facing the pillars there was also ornate decorations comprising lilies and these featured on the columns also. The description gives lots of detail, but it is the sort of detail written by a man who can refer to them, and doesn't really help us if we are trying to picture them, but he knows what he is portraying! His detailed description would however enable us to recognise them if any piece has survived anywhere, or any drawing comes to light. If you search the internet for the subject, "Columns", and explore the many ancient varieties you will see that these are Canaanite-Phoenician like in their structure, not like the later Greco-Roman ones, which were less in circumference. As noted above, I suspect that these columns were cast in sections and fitted together on site.

The names of the columns is interesting in itself, and has led most to believe that these pillars were not the two main supports of the porch of the building, but free standing pillars to either side of the doorway into the Holy Place standing in the midst of the porch area. The building itself is thirty cubits high and the pillars are 23+ cubits in total height, so there is a seven cubit space to the top of the roof. Later writers like Josephus do not help as, as he writes over 600 years after this temple's destruction and he has no access to accurate descriptions beyond the ones before us in Kings and Chronicles.

When I look at all the argument about these pillars I come to the conclusion that they were indeed free standing, and like the Cherubim they remind us that in this place the Righteousness and Justice of a Holy God meet through His grace provision in the mercy seat upon which the blood is sprinkled. One column was called Jachin ("He will establish"), and the other Boaz ("God give strength and endurance"). As the Holy Character of God stands forever the same, so these two columns signify the prayers of Solomon, that the God to whose glory this Temple was dedicated will cause it to stand to His Glory forever also. The Lord ensured this Temple stood to His glory for as long, and longer, than His people lived for His glory, but when they fell into gross sin, they and the Temple were removed, just as He had told them they would be. Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 27-28, 2 Chronicles 36:11-21.

Verses 23 – 26. The original bronze laver for the washing of the priests was an open basin before the tabernacle, and was able to be washed from, or water drawn from and used to wash hands and feet and the entire body anointed with this holy water. Exodus 30:17-21, 38:8, 40:30-32. The laver of Solomon is significantly larger than the original, and is too high to have water drawn from it, so there must have been a tap system to allow water to be drawn from it for daily use. There was also an overhead aqueduct to bring water into it. Neither of these are described by our author. He is focused upon the amazing weight and size of these items, not the mechanics of their use and even the priestly author of Chronicles does not tell us "how" the washing was done. 2 Chronicles 4:2-6.

The height of the statues of the twelve oxen upon which the laver sits is not given, but the height of the laver is given as 5 cubits (around 7 ½ feet, or 2.3 metres). This is far too high to dip into to get water and there must be some way the water came down to the level of the ground to wash hands and feet. The suspicion is that the mouths of the oxen may have been taps to release water for washing. If each oxen was life size, as would be expected, they would stand about 1 - 1½ metres at the shoulder. These would be hollow cast individually and assembled on site with a network of piping that is not mentioned. The thickness of the lip of the laver is given as a handbreadth (18 cm).

The weight of this is excessive if it was solid, and almost impossible to cast and then manoeuvre, and so the suspicion is that it was hollow-cast, and that the lip was then able to be cast with gourd decorations, and lilies, and then worked further by the craftsmen at the furnace site. Such a structure could be cast in sections and fitted together on site and still be waterproof, as the hollow sections could be made to fit into each other with a sealant used between them to ensure it was watertight. Even as a hollow structure it would be of great weight. It contained 2000 "baths", and each bath was 7.5 gallons. This makes 15,000 gallons, 120,000 pints, and a litre is 1 ¾ pints, this is 68,571 litres, which is the capacity of a standard 10 metre swimming pool.

The weight of bronze involved in this item is such that the Chronicles writer does not even try to estimate it. The hollow-bronze explanation for the casting of the items(possibly cast in sections and attached together with bolts/rivets securing the pieces) indicates also how it was later able to be broken up, whereas a solid structure could not be broken up by any tools available in that day. This large item was not the only laver, but there were ten further lavers on carriages with wheels five to the left and five to the right of the main laver. These were for cleansing rituals also. Their description is given next. There are some great casting details here that I will not comment upon, but for those who are artists in metals, refer to books and internet articles on these items, as they are extremely interesting as works of art and examples of how "advanced" the methods of Hiram the metal smith were.

Verses 27 – 39. Great pains are taken to describe these lavers and their construction, but it doesn't really help us greatly, as the meaning of the terms used can only be guessed at today and all art work of these items is just that, guess work. Each one of these ancillary lavers contained 40 baths, or 300 gallons, or 1372 litres. The symbolism of the great laver was of the sacrificial bullock of the sin and peace offerings, but the symbolism of these other lavers was far wider. The decorations encompassed lions, oxen, and cherubim. They speak of sacrifice, the nobility and strength of the character of God and the holiness of God protected by the heavenly cherubim.

The centrality of the cherubim in the Temple decorations reminds us that the perfection and unchangeable nature of the character of God is in view, but equally that the Angelic Conflict is portrayed. The cherubim remind the people that they are part of a great contest between Satan and his angelic (demonic) forces and the angels of the presence of God.

We forget these vital doctrines to our peril. I had reason to recall these vital doctrines to a young woman this last weekend. I had asked her to do some computer based work for me for the Bible College. I had warned her initially, that to undertake any important work for the Lord is to make herself a target for the enemy. She smiled at the time and nodded, and she did at least follow my instruction to back everything she did up, but she did not believe that the attacks on her would be so severe as they ended up being.

She told me that her health had been under attack all the time she did the work, and that her computer system had never crashed as many times as it did in this project. She had been physically and mentally exhausted by a project that she thought was a "simple one". She had under-estimated the hatred of the enemy for the work we do for the Lord.

We all need to give thanks for our guardian angel, and for the presence of the Holy Spirit, but we all need to be daily armed with the sharpened Word of God, and full armoured every day of our life in this world. Obey the Word, and “pray without ceasing” for protection in the Lord’s work, for the more you work the more the enemy will assault you.

Verses 40 – 45. This section summarises the work of the metal master-smith Hiram. He made all the bronze items, and the bright brass items of bowls and other implements used for the sacrificial system. The old items made by Bezaleel and Aholiab had lasted for over four hundred years of hard use in the tabernacle of Moses, but were well worn out now. It may be that all the worn items were stored in the upper chamber above the Holy of Holies. I do not think they were melted down, as they were holy items, and I suspect they were kept and incorporated in some way into the new Temple.

Nothing used for the service of God is cast away within Judaism. Even today all the old and worn out manuscripts are stored in places associated with the synagogues, (Called “Geniza”) and in some of these places great discoveries of ancient Hebrew texts have been made; one such place was at the synagogue in old Cairo. I believe the old items made by the two great craftsmen of Moses day, if they survived the Philistine’s attack, may have been laid aside in the new Temple somewhere by the Post-Exile builders. They, like all else would then have been taken into captivity, but only the smaller items were apparently returned with the exiles. Ezra 1:7-11.

Among the 1000+ vessels brought back there may have been some of the originals. These were placed in the new temple built by Zerubbabel. Ezra 5:1ff. This second temple was rebuilt and beautified by Herod the Great and was the one the Lord came to. Its treasures were then looted by the Romans in 70 AD and were taken to Rome. From there they were captured again by the Visigoths in the 400s of our era and taken to their capital city in what is now southern France. They leave the pages of dependable history there, but may yet turn up to re-enter the third temple, which is to be the Tribulational Temple.

I believe that the next temple to be built upon the Temple Mount is the one to which the Antichrist will come, and to which the Lord Himself will return at the end of the Great Tribulation Period. We are close to that time, so let us work as men and women who know the days are short! **1 Corinthians 7:29, Hebrews 10:37-39.** (Refer to ebcwa Prophecy File.)

Romans 13:11-14. *“11. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.*

12. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

13. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

14. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

Verses 46 – 51. These items were all cast in the plain of Jordan north of Jericho, between Succoth and Zarthan, in clay ground that was perfect for the moulds to be made for the bronze, and then the completed pieces were carried up to the Temple complex work site on wagons. This reinforces my view that each item was made up of sections, and they were fitted together on site. Hollow Bronze pieces can be cast so as each weighs no more than 100 kgs and so each is able to be loaded onto wagons, and they can then be used to transport them, and final assembly can be undertaken with moderate types of cranes, with wooden and rope blocks and tackles, which a dozen men can manage easily. They are held together by bronze or wooden pins and pitch for waterproofing the joints.

Each of the items described in this chapter would lend itself to being cast in sections and fitted together on site. The weight of the vessels was deliberately left uncounted as it was so vast. Solomon may also have been trying to avoid any arrogance or pride in this, so that none would boast with the figures of the value of this metal. There was to be no boasting in relation to this Temple, only glory to the Lord. The lack of arrogance in Solomon will however shift over time, and it is this shift that all biblical leaders need to be aware of in their own lives, so that we remain humble and quiet before the Lord, with no flashiness that can open the door to satanic counter attack.

Each of the old items of the Tabernacle were replaced by many more in the Temple. The old tabernacle had a single golden lampstand and a single table of “shewbread”, but in Solomon’s Temple the space in the Holy Place was larger and he had ten golden lamp stands made in the model of the old original, and placed five to each side of the altar of incense. Was this altar the original one from Moses day, or did he make another? We are not sure of that, but with everything else replaced, it would be logical for that to be replaced also.

He also made ten new tables for the shewbread, and a new altar outside. Where were the old items placed? We are not told here, but after 450 years of hard work they would be well and truly worn out; certainly the bronze altar before the tabernacle would be worn to a fragile state. All was made anew of gold and silver, and all the great store of gold and silver that David had left Solomon was placed in the treasury of the Temple to the glory of God.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Solomon built great buildings, but like all the buildings of this period, they are ruins now, all well buried by the work of later centuries. Nothing we build lasts for all time, and nothing that is able to be swept away by time should be our life’s purpose and focus. We can be amazed and rejoice in the work of this great king, but let us learn, as he learned, that these things are just “vanity of vanities” and that doing the will of the Lord is alone of eternal value.

2. All great things wear out over time and the old tabernacle was no exception. The great workmanship of Bezaleel and Aholiab was amazing, but it became worn over 450 years, and so Solomon made beautiful replacements for each item, and ten of each of the lamp stands and the tables. When we have to replace things in the Lord's work, let us do so with the same sense of celebration as Solomon had here.

3. Let us not be afraid of a thing wearing out; rather let us wear out our Bibles and every item of furniture in the Lord's work! Let us wear ourselves out for the Lord. Let us not allow anything to be sold after a ministry has passed the torch to another; let us make sure everything is worn out in the Lord's work! Let us be burning brands for the Lord, and finish our race with nothing left to use that hasn't been used for the glory of the Lord.
2 Timothy 3:6-8.

4. The only great shame for any ministry centres around attitude to things owned by the people involved and by the ministry itself. If everything is poured out in the Lord's work then all is a celebration, and when it is time to wind up, all that is useful and left over at the end, is given away to bless the poor, or another ministry. If we are attached to buildings, and all that goes in them we are not corrected related to the Lord and his called work.

REFLECTION UPON WORLDLINESS

1. Worldliness means to follow the beliefs and philosophy of man rather than that of God
2. Worldliness is the opposite to godliness; it is thinking/doing in opposition to God's revealed word. Titus 2:11-14.
3. All people are faced with the constant choice of following God's way or the world's. Romans 5:12, 3:19, 1 Corinthians 1:21, Ephesians 2:12, James 1:27, 2 Peter 1:4, 2:20.
4. Satan is the "prince of this world", and has power to deceive those who are negative to God's plans. John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 1 Corinthians 4:4, 1 Peter 5:8,9.
5. We must not love the world, 1 John 2:15-17.
6. We must hate all the world stands for, in thought and in deed. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, 11:30-32, Galatians 6:14, James 1:27, James 4:4, 2 Peter 1:3,4, 1 Corinthians 3:18, 19.
7. We must not return to our old behaviour patterns, Ephesians 2:1-7.
8. This evil world system and the prince of this world will be condemned. Matthew 18:7, John 12:31, 16:11, 1 Corinthians 6:2, 2 Peter 3:7, 2 Peter 2:1ff.

NOTES

CHAPTER 8**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter covers the dedication of the Temple and the activities associated and words said by Solomon to welcome the people and pray to the Lord. As you have noticed as you have read the book of Kings, nearly everything written in this book about King Solomon, centres in the building, and the dedicating of this Temple. It is the centre of his life work around which all else of value rotated. It is the project that kept him centred in the Lord in the early days of his rulership.

It becomes the centre of the worship of Israel for their time in the land as a nation, and upon its foundations the next temple is built to which the Lord of glory comes and his defeat of sin and death is illustrated within it. Matthew 27:51. It is sadly the place that sees the idolatry and rebellion of the people most clearly also. Its very magnificence becomes a snare to the people, and its wonderful appearance deceives them into thinking that appearance is reality in their own behaviours.

God sought holiness and righteousness in behaviours by all who worshipped in this temple, but they slipped into ritual without godly reality over the years. The prophets brought them back to the truth again and again, but each time there was more backsliding until there was no remedy, and the Lord swept all the beauty away.

2 Chronicles 36:14-16. *"14. Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.*

15. And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:

16. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy."

This temple complex becomes a pregnant metaphor for all that is good and sadly all that is evil in the spiritual life of Israel. At this point it is the greatness of the project that is celebrated, and the holiness and loving mercy of God is in focus. Let us see these things here, but notice also the shadow that passes over this ceremony, for behind the scenes Solomon has himself sown the seeds of destruction, just as he laid the foundation for holy worship. Let us be warned and chastened in our own attitudes to the things that we can lust after. **1 Corinthians 6:18, 10:14, 1 Timothy 6:10-11.**

1 KINGS 8:1-66

1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion. **2** And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. **3** And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. **4** And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up. **5** And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. **6** And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims. **7** For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above. **8** And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day. **9** There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. **10** And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, **11** So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD. **12** Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. **13** I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever. **14** And the king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel: (and all the congregation of Israel stood); **15** And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it, saying, **16** Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein; but I chose David to be over my people Israel. **17** And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. **18** And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. **19** Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name. **20** And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. **21** And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. **22** And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven: **23** And he said, LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart: **24** Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with

thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day. 25 Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. 26 And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father. 27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? 28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day: 29 That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. 30 And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive. 31 If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house: 32 Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness. 33 When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: 34 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers. 35 When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them: 36 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance. 37 If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; 38 What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: 39 Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men;) 40 That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers. 41 Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; 42 (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house; 43 Hear thou in heaven 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, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name. 44 If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name: 45 Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. 46 If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; 47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; 48 And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: 49 Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, 50 And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them: 51 For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron: 52 That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee. 53 For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O LORD God. 54 And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. 55 And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, 56 Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. 57 The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us: 58 That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers. 59 And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require: 60 That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else. 61 Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day. 62 And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD. 63 And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. 64 The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings: because the brasen altar that was before the LORD was too little to receive the burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings. 65 And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, before the LORD

our God, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days. 66 On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 4. In chapter 6, verse 38 we are told that the Temple building was finished in the eighth month of Solomon's eleventh year reigning as king. The dedication occurs in the feast week of the seventh month, so it must be the year following; namely the twelfth year of Solomon's reign. The feast is the Feast of Tabernacles (also called today the "Feast of Booths" as people leave their homes in Israel and spend much time under temporary shelters in their courtyards), although the name for the month here is the old pre-exile name; new names for some of the months of the year were taken during the exile. This feast falls in October-November in our calendar.

This feast speaks of the provision of the Lord for Israel during their wandering in the wilderness and their need to remember that they are a pilgrim people with a heavenly destiny with the Lord. It is the reminder to keep their eyes fixed on eternal realities, not the physical buildings in front of them on this earth. It also portrays the Millennial Reign of the Messiah upon the earth, so that all the realities of daily life before the Messiah rules are to be seen as merely a preparation for His reign. Its purpose is to focus people upon God's rule over the heavens and the earth, and to see everything before it as "temporary".

David had brought up the Ark to a tent he made for it in Jerusalem, but it was down the hill in the City of David somewhere. 2 Samuel 6. The first item to enter the new Temple appears to be the Ark of the Covenant, but close behind it are all the old items of the original tabernacle. The old Tabernacle of Moses, or a replacement had been left functioning in Gibeah, where it had been since the latter days of Saul. It was there that Solomon had gone after his coronation to worship. 1 Kings 3:1-15, 2 Chronicles 1:1-12. He had seen the old furniture and knew he was called to replace it all with things that were new and appropriate for the new kingdom worship, but he will gather the old tent and all the old furniture and bring it all up to the new Temple.

Verse four makes it clear that everything in the old "Tabernacle of the Congregation" was brought up to the new Temple and placed somewhere within it in what we could call "holy retirement". We would love the writer to tell us a lot more here, but his focus is upon the new, not the exact final resting place of the old, but as I have already noted above, most commentators believe the items were all stored in the secret and sealed space above the Holy of Holies.

Everything is done properly, with Levites carrying the items, as they had in the days of the Exodus. Numbers 3-4. It is a holy and likely silent procession that enters the Temple and the priests offer sacrifices to honour the tabernacle and then carefully store all the items away in reverence and thankfulness for nearly four hundred and fifty years of service to the people.

Verses 5 – 9. The entry and placement of the Ark is now described and some important clues are given here about the source that the writer used for the material of the book, and also that the Ark had been damaged and items taken from it at some point. Exodus 25:9-28 describes the Ark as it was made. The Ark had contained several items as a result of the Exodus march. First and foremost it was a container for the "testimony" of the Lord's dealings with Israel, the "Ten Words"; the Ten Commandments carved upon stone. It also contained Aaron's rod that budded, and a golden pot of manna.

It was a box upon which the lid was placed. The lid section was called the "Mercy Seat" and was made from a single piece of hammered gold. The mercy seat spoke of salvation, and the contents spoke of God's rules for His people, His authority over His people, and His provision for His people. His Law, His human authority figures, and His physical provisions were all covered by the blood upon the Mercy Seat. Exodus 16:32-34, 40:20-21, Numbers 17:6-11, Deuteronomy 10:1-5, Hebrews 9:1-5.

My suspicion is that the golden pot was probably taken by the Philistines and melted down with the lid of the Ark that comprised the Mercy Seat and cherubim, but the box itself, and the two tablets of stone of the Law, as the image of the Israelite Moral Law, may have been left intact or broken, as they would be seen by them as an important part of their victory over God. The staff of Aaron would be seen by them as signifying Israelite rulership, and would be the first thing removed and broken. The Philistines realised that they did not have any victory at all within months, and returned the Ark, and with it they returned all the gold they had stolen in offering form, but the rod and the manna appear to be lost. Re-read now the appropriate section of the Commentary on 1 Samuel covering this story. 1 Samuel 5:1 – 6:12. The Ark was an empty and damaged box when it was returned, but it will remain in the Holy of Holies, as described below.

All the people who could gather from around the land gathered at the dedication of the Temple. Populations of communities through the land would have been reduced to basic numbers of the very old and the very young for guarding of the flocks and herds, and there may have been more than two million people at this gathering, sleeping out on the hills around the city of Jerusalem, as they did in the days of Jesus. After years of plenty and peace the population had exploded, and this was a feast time that every Israelite was expected to attend. Leviticus 23:33-44, Numbers 29:12-40, Deuteronomy 16:13-15.

The sacrifices offered were far more than those assigned for the simple celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, for the great altar of the Temple had to be dedicated and it was dedicated in the blood of thousands of animals, which were

cooked and eaten by the priests and the people in holy and joyful celebration of the reunion of the Ark and tabernacle in the new and glorious central place of worship.

The Ark (always covered) was then carried into the Holy of Holies by the priests and placed between and under the two great carved and gilded olive tree cherubim. This piece of information, I believe, removes all speculation about the original cherubim on the lid of the Ark being missing, for clearly they are, as the Ark is spoken of as a box with staves, no lid is mentioned at all. The tablets of stone appear to be visible to the priests within the box as it is placed between the cherubim. The tablets are identified as the only contents of the Ark and they were clearly visible or they could not have been commented upon.

This also strengthens my view, stated above, that the golden covered altar described in chapter 6:20 was also under the cherubim's wings and was the new place that the blood was sprinkled upon. The Ark may have stood within a few feet of the altar, both being under the cherubim, with the altar closest to the dividing wall and the Ark closer to the back wall, but both still under the shadow of the enormous wings of the two carved cherubim.

Verses 10 – 13. The divine certification of the work done, and the correctness of Solomon's replacement of the Mercy Seat with the new altar and two enormous cherubim, now occurs. As the priest leave the inner chamber and close the door behind them the Shekinah glory of God fills the Temple, and the priests had to even leave the Holy Place and stand outside the building. The cloud covers the entire building, and I believe, would have been seen by all who are there from the hills around. This is an important repetition of what occurred when the first tabernacle was set up. Exodus 40:33-38, Deuteronomy 4:11, 5:19. It proves to Solomon that what he has done is acceptable to the Lord and that this temple will indeed be the place that will replace the tabernacle and all Israel can begin again to worship together here.

Solomon then begins a public prayer to acknowledge the visible presence of the Lord. He notes that the Lord is indeed a consuming fire, and that he is relieved that his house has been accepted, and his prayer is that it will be the house of God forever. Exodus 24:17, Deuteronomy 4:24, 9:1-3. Sadly this prayer will be answered in the negative due to the later sinfulness of the people. Hebrews 10:28-31, 12:25-29.

Verses 14 – 21. The people have, until this point, been sitting quietly watching the procession and seeing the smoke rise from the many sacrifices. They have been sitting on all the vacant land and on top of all the buildings around about. The hills opposite the Kidron Valley along the Mount of Olives would have been covered with people, as possibly also the new parts of the city on the Western Ridge against the Tyropoean Valley. As has been noted above, if all the people who could come, have come, then the numbers will be well over a million people and may be around two million.

Solomon turns to face outwards from the sanctuary and begins his address-prayer on behalf of the people, and all the people are now up-standing. The writer notes this, and it cannot be because Solomon is turning to speak, for few could actually see him, but probably because the cloud is now visible to all around that mountain. Solomon will be clearly visible to few of those gathered there that day. He faces the crowd of leaders in the outer court, and all who could, would strain to hear his voice, but that would be few. I believe that the blessing and prayer here has been written up many days before and circulated amongst the elders of the tribes as they arrive, so that the people can have this read to them in their various assembled groups.

Even in Jesus day, nearly a thousand years later, the various tribal groups, extended families, and even township members, all slept in the same locations on the surrounding hills when they came to the feasts. With accepted, traditional places to sleep and gather, it was easy for family groups to look out for each other amongst the millions who gathered. Luke 2:41-50. In the days when the members of all the twelve tribes were there, they may have been gathered under their tribal banners on the hills around about the city, much as they did around the tabernacle. Numbers Chapter Two.

Solomon's blessing is more than a simple blessing; it is a political and religious statement of the divine blessing upon the choice of Jerusalem as the national centre, and a solemn warning to all the tribes that this is now their capital city, and all tribes are to look to this temple and this city as their centre. 2 Chronicles 6:3-13. Solomon is stating that David's choice of Jerusalem was in fact God's choice.

This is a carefully crafted speech, and it is designed to bind them all together as a nation around the temple as their spiritual centre. Everything about this speech indicates to me that it was written well before the ceremony and has been distributed to the elders for reading aloud, for these words are vital for everyone to take back to their tribal areas. Solomon wanted the Temple to unify the nation and for the other tribal groups to recognise that God's hand of blessing was upon David and his house forever so that no rebellion occurred later against his descendents.

In verse 54 we are told that Solomon "arose from praying" and that he arose from before the Altar, so at some specific point he must turn back, away from the Elders in the courtyard, towards the Temple and pray on his knees. We are not told what the people did at that point; whether they got on their knees, or remained standing with heads bowed and arms outstretched, as was the later custom.

Notice the strong statements made in these words he speaks aloud:

1. David received the words of God from the very mouth of God. This places David alongside Abraham and Moses himself, yet the words of God come to David by prophet, not directly as they were to Moses. Exodus 33:11, Numbers 12:6-8, Deuteronomy 34:10, 2 Samuel 7:5-16.

2. God had chosen Jerusalem and the successful completion of this building proves that.
3. David was chosen to be the king over the people by God's solemn anointing, and he is the one to whom God directly tasked the preparation for the building of the Temple. 1 Samuel 16:1-13, 2 Samuel 7:8-16.
4. God's promise to David was that his son would build the Temple, and Solomon is that son who was promised, and he has indeed completed the Temple.
5. The Temple is built for the name of the Lord. Solomon is standing in the place of obedience to the Lord and he is the anointed of the Lord, proved by his actions of fulfilling the promise that came by the prophet.
6. The Ark is restored to its central place in the worship of Israel. Once again, by this reference to the Ark, Solomon binds the house of David together with the house of Moses and Levi as the house which has restored the worship of their ancestors who came out of Egypt. What Moses and the house of Levi began the house of David has completed. The religious and the political are once again united in one place with one purpose to worship the one true God.

Verses 22 – 25. Solomon now begins his prayer to the Lord. Does he turn around and face the Temple at this point? The writer notes he stands by the Altar at this point, so I suspect he has moved from the steps of the Temple, where he would be visible to many to stand in front of the great Bronze Altar and faces that blood soaked Altar as he prays, now on his knees (verse 54). It is a powerful picture of prayer being acceptable only through the blood of the sacrifice. The prayer he utters now is a very formal prayer, and I believe this is also a written prayer that all the various gathered groups have their own copy of, so that his words are read aloud on every hill to the assembled people. The exact words of leaders when they speak at important events should be freely available to God's people, so that all may audit them, approve them, and join in prayer with them.

It is a doctrine filled prayer, covering all the principles of spirituality that Solomon himself will sadly forget later in his reign. It is a prayer that draws upon the Mosaic and Davidic prayers for its content. Exodus 3:15, 15:1-14, Psalms 86:1-15, 113:1-5. Solomon was compared to Ethan the Ezrahite in 1 Kings 4:31, and his prayer in Psalm 89:1-8 either draws upon this prayer of Solomon, or he is influenced by it. Solomon's great prayer here draws on all the previous spiritual sources he has access to and it becomes the pattern for dedicatory prayer from then onwards. Isaiah 40:18-25, Jeremiah 10:6-16.

Solomon again strongly brings the fulfilled promise to David into his prayer, underling the Lord's choice of David, himself as David's son, and this city as David's city as the leadership capital of the nation. Verse twenty three makes the strong point that the Lord's mercy towards the king and the people is conditional upon their on-going obedience to the Law of Moses. The covenant of Moses is dependent upon obedience, but it is not just basic obedience, but obedience "with all their heart" that God requires of them. This whole hearted obedience to the Lord is at the centre of Solomon's understanding of God's dealings with his people. He sees and understands that the Lord requires all our heart, and all the details of our life, not just a part of it.

Solomon's prayer is that the words of the prophet Nathan will be fulfilled and that David's line might not lose their right to sit upon the throne of their father. His prayer recognises however that each new king must walk as David walked to have his blessing. Refer again now to the passage that sums up the sadness of the history of Solomon's house. 2 Chronicles 36:11-21.

Verses 26 – 30. This part of the prayer of Solomon is well known by many, for it sums up the holiness and otherness of God in the best way in any prayer ever prayed, yet it builds upon the earlier words of his father David. Psalms 41:13, 113:4-6, 139:7-16. Solomon seeks the verification of the words given to David and the assurance of the truth of the promises of the Davidic Covenant. He seeks to understand more of the Messianic Hope, but also be assured of his own kingdom's strength and stability. He seeks that the Temple might be the visible assurance of the truth of the Davidic Covenant, and that the Lord's dwelling there might encourage the people to draw closer to holiness and truth.

The temple was magnificent and it was indwelt by the Shekinah glory of the Lord, and this visible presence was powerful, but the tabernacle had also been overshadowed by the glory of God and the people had still rebelled against Moses thirteen times! Solomon is hoping that the glory of this building will be enough to secure the obedience of the people to the words of the Lord, but he underestimates the power of negativity within men. If people do not want to allow the Lord to rule over them then they will not be influenced by great architecture and grandeur of buildings any more than they are influenced by the awesomeness of nature. Solomon prays that his prayers and those of the people might be heard from this place and that it might be the house of powerful prayer that he desired it to be. Psalms 4:1, 5:1, 34:15, 86:3-7, 88:1-2, 141:2-5.

Verses 31 – 33. While the positive answers to positive prayers on the part of positive people is a thing God delights in, the judgement of evil motivation and action is also His work, although His less preferred work. Isaiah 28:21-27. It is all very well for us to approach the Lord and ask for things we desire, but we must be ready to receive His judgement for things we have done wrong also, for His righteousness and holiness must be honoured and judgement is to be expected upon sin and evil.

Solomon requests the judgement of the Lord upon all oath breaking and other behaviours that undermine the security of society. Solomon requests that the Lord's actions may amplify righteousness and reward all actions that are good, and judge unrighteousness and correct those guilty of evil actions. He recognises that defeat at the hands of their enemies is a sign that they have fallen short of the Lord's standards, and he prays that when they fall short and face defeats, that their prayer of repentance will be answered. Leviticus 26:17-25, Deuteronomy 28:25, 48. It is a certainty that this prayer

is answered, but it is important that he reminds the people of these things, for they need to remember that defeat is judgement and that repentance is a necessity for their survival as a nation, not an optional extra. Holiness and righteousness becomes a nation, but unrighteousness will always bring judgement upon all peoples. Proverbs 14:34.

Verses 34 – 39. Solomon is on good ground in asking these things for he is able to quote the promises of God in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28-29, and this is the purpose of prayer; it is to remind ourselves of the promises of God and claim them in our situation. Solomon takes seriously the threat of exile from the land and he mentions the prayer that will be offered nearly five hundred years from this day and will be answered by the Lord. The Israelites will return from Babylonian captivity in response to their repentance under the ministry of Ezekiel, backed by the previous work of Jeremiah, and the oversight of Daniel.

Solomon has read the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 28 which tell graphically of the second great exile after 70AD and he clearly believes that the Lord will bring His people back from this exile as well. He knows all too well the earlier cycles of discipline that are threatened upon disobedient Israel and recalls that the prayer of repentance will lead to deliverance from famine, drought, pestilence, and disasters on land and sea.

Solomon knows that the prayer of faith will save the sinner who truly repents and he rests, as we must all rest, upon the holy and stable character of God. We may fail Him but God never fails us. 2 Timothy 2:12-13. God knows our hearts, and yet He will forgive when we turn to Him again, for He remembers that we are dust. Psalms 103:14.

Verses 40 – 47. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”. Proverbs 1:7. What does this mean? The fear that is spoken of here is the respect for the Lord as He truly is, and the acceptance of our creature status so that we might do the things that we should before the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the opposite to the arrogance of man before the Lord. It is the humility of a person who sees who they are and accepts God for who He is and for what He has done and will do. This correct appreciation of the character and work of the Lord means that the believer purifies their life and lives as they should before the Lord and man.

A correct view of God will always overflow into a correct morality and life style in the world. Those who have not purified their own lives, have not understood who God truly is, and they do not have a holy “fear of the Lord”. **Psalms 19:9, Proverbs 3:7, 8:13, 14:26-27, 15:33.** To truly see the Lord for who He is purifies the life and settles the heart, for then, from respect for the Lord there is a relationship in which you can truly relax and be strong. **Psalms 23:4ff, 25:14, 27:1, 118:4-6, 147:11, 2 Corinthians 7:1-15.** The paradox of the fear of the Lord, is that it eliminates all fear through the relationship with God that it opens up. **1 Corinthians 16:10, 2 Timothy 1:7, Hebrews 13:5-6, 1 John 4:18.**

The “stranger” will be drawn by the Temple and the reputation of Israel as the people of God. God’s purpose from the beginning was that Israel should be evangelical in their attitude to others and lead the nations to worship the true God. Solomon sees that their responsibility is to be light to the world for God’s sake. Solomon prays for the stranger who comes with an open heart and requests that the Lord answer his prayers as He will answer an Israelite.

This is an amazing prayer given the arrogance that will become the normal way of dealing with strangers later in Israel’s history. The Temple was meant to be a beacon for evangelism, and under Solomon it was, but sadly very quickly it became a Jewish only place, and strangers were no longer welcome unless they became Jews first. Solomon emphasises the importance of repentance and restoration as the central things in God’s dealings with man. We all must confront our sins and then we can boldly approach our creator and Saviour again, and know we will be heard and forgiven. **Acts 4:29-31, Ephesians 3:12, 1 Timothy 3:13, Hebrews 4:16, 10:19, 13:6, 1 John 4:17.**

Verses 48 – 53. Prayer was to be addressed towards Jerusalem and this Temple, and where ever the Jewish person found themselves, this place was the place they were to orient themselves towards. Nehemiah does this in the captivity, as does Daniel. Nehemiah 1:4-11, Daniel 6:10ff. Daniel prays to Jerusalem even though the very act has been forbidden by the then pagan king Nebuchadnezzar. The pagan king is soon saved by seeing that Daniel’s God is indeed the true and only God. Daniel 4:34-37.

It is the CHARACTER OF GOD that Solomon emphasises throughout this ceremony, and it is this doctrine that is the foundation for our own stability in worship. God is the God of compassion towards mankind, and judgement remains his “strange work”. Isaiah 28:21, Ezekiel 33:11. Let us remember the character of our Almighty God and proclaim the truth about His character, and not let men abuse the Lord as an “angry God”, who loves judging men, for He delights in our salvation, not our judgement. Judgement will come upon all who reject His Person, His Work and His Word, but only after grace is given for a very long time. 2 Peter 3:9-13.

Solomon’s whole speech here emphasises the grace, love and mercy of the glory of the Eternal and Almighty God. God’s sovereign choice has made Israel the people of God, by grace, not by their deserving such choice. We also are recipients of God’s great grace towards us. Ephesians 2:4-10.

Verses 54 – 62. It is now that we are told of Solomon’s posture in prayer; he was on his knees facing the great Bronze Altar with his arms stretched out from his side. Now while no one posture is more “holy” than another, being on your knees is a good start with prayer. He rises at the end of his formal prayer and blesses the people again. Once again I believe these prayers and blessings were in a written “Order of Service” that was being read to all the people gathered on the hills around the Temple, and unable to see or hear these events closely. Remember, this is a literate society.

Solomon reminds the people that not one word of the Lord given to Moses has failed in any way. Everything God said to Moses was fulfilled and the generation that heard the words, saw the acts of God to vindicate Moses, and prove his words were indeed the very words of God. God acted again and again to vindicate Moses in the eyes of the people, and so Solomon asks the Lord to prove He is with the people still by mighty acts that prove His presence.

The fact that the Shekinah glory has already filled the Temple by this point is evidence that this prayer is already answered, and is also evidence that this is a prepared speech, and that Solomon doesn't change it, even though the Lord has already filled the Temple with His glory. As these words are read around the hills to all the gathered people they can see that the words are already fulfilled with the cloud that stands above the Temple building and they know that their king's words are "good words".

He also calls for the people to walk before the Lord in absolute obedience to the Lord's words in the Mosaic Law and so walk worthily through this life in a manner that brings glory to their God. **Philippians 2:9-16, Hebrews 13:20-21**. Solomon prays for future generations, but he cannot bless them from afar without their cooperation. They must join him in his prayer to join him in his blessing. This remains the principle of blessing today.

Solomon's prayer is that his words will have a lasting impact upon the Lord and be always before Him, and that God will always hear His people. His words will be recorded here forever, and when each generation renews their commitment to the Lord and prays these words themselves, they will be heard. God hears and will always hear His people. Prayers uttered in accordance with the will of the Lord will always be answered by the Lord, but they may be answered many years beyond the day the actual prayer is uttered.

A prayer for us by a grand-parent, now long dead, may still be working out in our life for glory to the Lord and blessing to us! Prayer is powerful and lasts for many generations, but each one must receive the promise by their own faith and spiritual fruitfulness. We cannot "cover" in prayer our disobedient children beyond the point when they reject the Lord's path for their lives. God's blessing over all people is upon the true godly path for their life only, so if they wander off His path into the "high way" of the enemy, they will suffer the penalty that is on that path. Matthew 7:13-20.

There is an important addition to the prayer and blessing of Solomon at this point that was recorded by the writer of Chronicles. Turn and read **2 Chronicles 6:41-42**. This appears to be a quote from the Psalms, covering several verses of Psalms 132. It may be that Solomon was the author of Psalms 132, or that another writer reading his speech at the opening of the Temple composed this Psalm, with the other "Songs of Degrees", Psalms 120-134, for use in the Temple. It is speculation only on my part, but I suspect Solomon may be the author of these Psalms, but we cannot know for sure at this distance.

Verse 60 reminds us that the purpose of Israel's mission is to the entire world. Judaism was the preparation for the Messiah, and His mission, like their own, was to the whole world, for there is one God and He is the Lord. Deuteronomy 4:29-40, Joshua 4:21-24, 1 Samuel 17:45-47, 2 Kings 19:19. To fulfil their mission to the world the people need in every generation to purify their hearts before the Lord and be holy. This is the command of the Lord towards us from the beginning to the end of the scriptures. **Leviticus 11:44-45, 19:2, 20:7, Ephesians 1:4, 5:27, 1 Peter 1:15-16**.

In **verse 61** the order to "be perfect" is to be noted. The word here as the Greek one used in the New Testament does not mean perfect in terms of "without sin", for only one is without sin and that is the Lord, but it means to be "completely ready and equipped" to serve the Lord. **Psalms 37:37-40**. It means for us, to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit, with the armour of the Spirit, in the filling of the Spirit, and so be fully and completely ready to serve the Lord, "in spirit and in truth". It means to be spiritual, rather than carnal in our walk through this life.

Verses 63 – 66. The prayer and blessing of the king on behalf of the people ends with even more sacrifices (verse 62). The number of sacrifices was excessive at 22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep, although this had to feed over a million people remember. In fact from these numbers of animals we can estimate that the numbers of people at the festival were over the million mark. This was a feasting time that went over several days, with animals being killed, and the blood brought to the altar with their fat for burning, and the body given to the priests and people for food through the days of the feast. Even so, the amount of blood that would flow through into the valleys around was enormous. Leviticus 1-4.

Rivers of blood would have flowed through the drains from the altar into the Kidron valley, and also possibly into the Tyropoean Valley to the south west of the Temple Mount on the west of the old City of David. Don't worry about the numbers here, for they have been independently verified from the days of St Paul. In the reign of the emperor Nero the procurator Cestius ordered a count of the Passover Lambs for one year to report to the Emperor Nero. In one year counted there were 250,000 lambs slaughtered at one Passover, and this would be for upwards of two million people to eat. Josephus, Wars of the Jews, VI, 9:3.

The middle of the outer court also became an enormous altar area, and was dedicated in the blood of the sacrifices also, as the main bronze altar was not large enough to enable all the sacrifices to be brought. We are not told, but multiple temporary altars may have been set up in the outer courtyard to undertake this many sacrifices. It appears that the blood flowed over this entire courtyard and it was dedicated. The drainage system for the entire Temple area was very extensive so that water was collected or blood carried away into the valleys below. Blood sacrifice is not meant to be pretty or pleasant, for it speaks of the horror of sin and evil and the cost of it to the Lord upon the cross.

The total time for the dedication service was fourteen days, with seven full days of feasting. The people left for home on the eighth day after the completion of the feast of Tabernacles. It may be that the additional seven was required for people to arrive and be organised and then leave in good order after the dedication and feast was over, or that the dedication took seven days and the Feast of Tabernacles was then held; it is not clear. The final result was joy on the part of the people, and they all rejoiced in what the Lord had done through the house of David for the nation Israel.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. In our Communion service today we say, "Until he comes", as we hold our glass of grape juice. We do this for the same reason that the Feast of Tabernacles is celebrated in booths in the back yard of the Israelis of today. It is the reminder that everything that happens upon this present earth is but a prelude to the rulership of the Lord Jesus Christ over the entire earth. It is the reminder that He is coming to rule the earth and that we must not get too attached to the details of life in this present world order. Let us bow now before the Lord and dedicate all we have to the Lord again, and recognise afresh that all that is here is temporary and to be occupied only "until he comes". Let us focus upon Him.

2. The Ark was a wonderful picture of the provision of God for His people Israel. They were protected by the righteousness and holiness/justice of God (Cherubim), and covered by the blood of the sacrifice (Mercy Seat), and under the cover of the blood, the Lord gave them Law, human leadership and authority to follow, and food to eat. Let us give thanks for the GIFTS RECEIVED AT SALVATION, and for the on-going provision of grace, mercy and peace to us every day we walk in the Holy Spirit's fellowship, protection and powerful guidance.

3. God's blessing upon our work is the only certification that matters. If the Lord accepts our work then it is acceptable and useful and we are accepted. The cloud's presence for Solomon is like the fruit of the Holy Spirit today in a work of God's people. The evidence of God's presence is always visible upon, in, and through the lives of the people. It is whole hearted obedience that the Lord requires of His people. He does not want us to be partially obedient, but fully, passionately, and completely obedient to Him, as children are to their loved parent. Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27, 18:15-17, Galatians 5:22. Without whole hearted love for the Lord and our brethren, there is no real evidence of salvation. 1 John 4:7-21.

4. There are marital, family, community and national consequences of unrighteousness. If a people walk away from God's holy standards, then they will experience personal and national trouble, even catastrophe. When we look at the evils in our society we are to be aware that they are nearly always the result of individual unrighteousness that has gotten to a level where the bonds that keep societies intact have unravelled. Let us remember the FIVE CYCLES OF NATIONAL DISCIPLINE, Leviticus 26, for all nations are in the same danger area for the disasters that befell Israel. Let us be quick to confess our sins and always ready to come before the Lord in repentance and renewed obedience to His Word.

5. Boldness in our approach to the Lord depends upon our honest acceptance of our sins and our whole hearted dealing with them. It is robust faith that the Lord seeks, and that depends upon total honesty to the Lord. Let us be robust in our lives and strong in our witness, and let us lay the foundation for these things by being honest in our confession of our sins to the Lord, and vigorous in our restitution to any men we have wronged.

6. Let us walk worthily of our God. To walk worthy of the Lord means to walk in the power and provision of the Holy Spirit through this world. It means to walk in spirituality not carnality. This opens the door to the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the great fruit of the Spirit is not only joy for the believer but the wonderful witness of the Spirit filled life in the world. Satan cannot counter the impact of a Holy Spirit filled believer, and so let us stand in the Spirit and so be truly useful to our Lord.

REFLECTION UPON CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

1. Forgiveness is by the death of Christ (Matthew 26:28, Revelation 1:5)

2. Divine forgiveness is to all who believe in Christ (Acts 10:43, Acts 16:31)

3. The penalty of sin was paid by Christ on the cross. (Hebrews 9:22, 2 Corinthians 5:21)

4. When a believer sins his fellowship with God is disrupted. God forgives these sins upon confession and cleanses from the unknown sins in the believer's life as well as known sins. (1 John 1:9).

5. Jesus Christ is our propitiation. (1 John 2:1,2)

6. In human forgiveness we are told to forgive others even as God has forgiven us (Ephesians 4:32). This can only be accomplished by the filling of the Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:22,23)

7. Steps towards restoration of fellowship

[a] Examine yourself for genuineness of motivation. (2 Corinthians 14:5)

[b] Act on what you see (Romans 4:7-8)

[c] Deal with any sin by confession. (1 John 1:9, Psalm 66:18)

- [d] Forget the sin you have confessed. Do not proceed into a pattern of guilt. (Philippians 3:13-14, Psalm 103:10-12)
[e] Resume your active spiritual walk. Avoid areas where you might be tempted by the sin which so easily besets us. (Hebrews 12:12-13)
[f] Be reconciled to others once you have been reconciled to God. (James 5:16)
[g] Get moving and grow up. (2 Peter 2:17-18)

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

1. God's faithfulness is based on his unchangeability - Hebrews 13:8
2. God's faithfulness is renewed "every day" - Lamentations 3:21-24
3. His promises are sure. - Hebrews 10:23
4. The faithfulness of Christ continues even when we are unfaithful. - 2 Timothy 2:13
5. Christ is a faithful and merciful high priest - Hebrews 2:17
6. God is faithful to forgive sins - 1 John 1:9
7. God is faithful to keep us saved - 2 Timothy 2:13
8. God is faithful to deliver us through temptation - 1 Corinthians 10:13
9. God is faithful to keep His promises to us - Hebrews 10:23
10. God is faithful to us in suffering - 1 Peter 4:19
11. God is faithful in fulfilling His plan for us - I Thessalonians 5:24
12. God is faithful to strengthen us - 2 Thessalonians 3:3
13. God is the faithful partner of our union with Christ - 1 Corinthians 1:9
14. Christ is a faithful and merciful high priest - Hebrews 2:17
15. Jesus Christ is synonymous with faithfulness - Revelation 19:11

NOTES

CHAPTER 9**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter forms a summary of Solomon's major works and it appears to be a very shortened version of other records that were around at the time but are now lost to us. It covers the building work, the great naval expedition to Ophir, and the dispute between Hiram and himself, as well as the ominous wedding present from Pharaoh for his daughter. It also covers the promise of God regarding the city of Jerusalem and the Temple itself. God's words to Solomon this second time are recorded and their significance flows down through history to our own day.

We get some clues about the extensive rebuilding of Jerusalem under Solomon and its expansion to incorporate the temple and the western ridge for palaces and accommodation for the servants of the king. The small Jebusite city was no more the isolated little fortress at the end of the ridge overlooking the two valleys of Kidron and the Tyropoean, but was simply now the citadel of a major city stretching north and west to cover the hills.

In his great building he expressed his majesty and power, but the cost of it was extensive and the taxation burden in wealth and indentured service by the people was great, and rebellion was not far from the surface by the end of his reign. Everyone loves a winner, as long as the cost isn't too high! Solomon allowed his sense of grandeur to overstep his budgeting ability, and he bankrupted the nation, and the excessive taxation to maintain the grandness led to rebellion.

1 KINGS 9:1-28

1 And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, **2** That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. **3** And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. **4** And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: **5** Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. **6** But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: **7** Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: **8** And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house? **9** And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil. **10** And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house, **11** (Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. **12** And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not. **13** And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day. **14** And Hiram sent to the king six score talents of gold. **15** And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer. **16** For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife. **17** And Solomon built Gezer, and Bethhoron the nether, **18** And Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land, **19** And all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. **20** And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel, **21** Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day. **22** But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen: but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen. **23** These were the chief of the officers that were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work. **24** But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David unto her house which Solomon had built for her: then did he build Millo. **25** And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the LORD. So he finished the house. **26** And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber, which is beside Elath, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom. **27** And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. **28** And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 3. Solomon is, without being aware of it, half way through his reign when he has finished his palace and the Temple. He has been married to the princess of Egypt for some time before she moves into her new palace but we are not told the time frame exactly, and are left with the impression that she may have waited twenty years for her new home. She may be a very patient woman, or a very frustrated one. Certainly her father will send a message with his wedding present that strikes an ominous tone. This was a marriage that should not have been accepted at all.

Solomon will reign for forty years; the first twenty years spent building the Temple and palaces, and the last twenty are spent building or rebuilding the great fortresses of the land. This is important given the rising power of Egypt but absorbs vast resources that finally will exhaust the nation. His alliance is a dodgy one with Egypt, for they deliver a captured town to him as a wedding present, verses 16, with the bodies of the previous Canaanite inhabitants still warm within it. Solomon rebuilds this city as a fortress for himself but the warning of the Egyptians is clear; far to the south they are building military power again.

From the chronology of the writer of Kings the Lord appears again to Solomon at this half way point in his reign. The Lord has spoken directly to this man only twice in his life at this point. Notice this carefully, because many today believe the Lord is specifically talking to them every second day! If the wisest man upon the earth is spoken to by the Lord directly only twice in twenty years it is a lesson to us!

The Lord speaks daily through His Word, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, but specific words from the Lord are very rare, and few need to receive them at all. Let us be humble and careful in claiming special revelation today, lest we make fools of ourselves, and our Lord. Specific revelation is a very rare thing indeed through history, and is normally a sign of great things to be done, great dangers to be faced, or a combination of the two. 2 Chronicles 7:11-22. Be wary of any man who claims to be receiving great things from the Lord and does very little, but asks for great financial support – he is certainly a fake.

God had spoken directly to Solomon in a dream of the night at Gibeah, twenty years before, in that first year of his reign. 1 Kings 3:4ff, 2 Chronicles 1:2ff. He had heard the words of God in his mind and they were clear and powerful. He had offered up his great prayer at the Temple dedication in the twelfth year of his reign, and eight years later he receives the full and final answer to that prayer. This is a reminder that our time is not God's time, and the plan of God calls for faith to be expressed through time until the answer to prayer comes. **Isaiah 55:7-9.**

Many of us would feel a little worried if we thought we had to wait for eight years to get an answer to a prayer, but it is worth waiting for the Lord's time and the Lord's words, for then we know we have the Lord's will and the blessing associated with being on the Lord's path for us through this brief life. Deuteronomy 12:11-14, Romans 15:4-5, Hebrews 10:36. Patience is indeed a forgotten fruit of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord's answer to Solomon's great dedication prayer is clear; He has hallowed the site of this Temple and He has placed His name there. Although Solomon is not told the details by the Lord of events after his time, this place is to be the site of four temples. Solomon has built the first, Zerubbabel will build, and later Herod will rebuild the second. Both will be destroyed because of the disobedience of the people, and their rejection of the prophets in the first case, and the Messiah in the second.

The first Temple will be destroyed in 586BC by the troops of Nebuchadnezzar after the people have rejected the ministry of the prophets Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and finally Jeremiah. There was a forty year period of grace during which the people could have repented of their evil and followed the words of the prophets but they became worse and worse, even carrying away Jeremiah into captivity in Egypt where he dies.

The second temple is visited by the Lord of glory Himself, Matthew 21:12ff, Luke 21:37-38, and He is welcomed there as the king by many on what we know as Palm Sunday. John 12:12-19. He is then rejected and pierced by His own people and cast aside for the Gentile rulers to kill. John 19:1-12, 34-37. This second temple later saw the miracle of the man born blind, and later the arrest of Paul. Acts 3:4ff, 21:31ff. The third will see the ultimate blasphemy of anti-Christ.

Outside the record of Acts it will also see the murder of James while at prayer in the outer courtyard. There will be around forty lunar years of grace for this second temple as there was for the first, but the majority of the people turn away from their Messiah and the Temple is destroyed again with the people of the nation who preferred their way to God's way.

Before the Great Tribulation another Temple, the third, will be built upon the site and to this temple the Antichrist will come to set up his satanic statue half way through the Tribulation period of seven years. Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14. This tribulation temple will be established in false satanic hope of peace between all religions, and for a time all groups will worship on the Temple Mount side by side in harmony, but once Anti-Christ moves and sets up his statue there, then the last phase of Satan's great war upon the Jews will open with three and a half years of hell upon earth.

This time is known as the Great Tribulation; the time of Jacob's Trouble. It will be a time when Arab and Jew join together fully to work against the Anti-Christ's rulership and idolatry. The Lord will return to destroy and cleanse this temple site and a Millennial Temple will be established upon the correct site that has been in the Lord's sight since the very establishment of this first temple by Solomon.

This is the heart of the Lord's answer to the prayer of Solomon; the place where he built this first Temple to God is now a sacred site for all time and it will be the place that the Lord will reign from. From this promise to Solomon here we can be sure that the real site of the Temple of Solomon has not been overbuilt by any mosque to date, or if it has, it will be flattened during the final return of the Lord and the Millennial Temple built on the exact site of Solomon's Temple.

My suspicion, already mentioned previously, is that the small cupola called the "Testament of Moses" to the north of the present two mosques marks the likely spot of the Holy of Holies of Solomon's Temple. It stands exactly west of the present Golden Gate, which is built upon the foundations of a more ancient gate. This great platform has not seen its greatest or sadly most terrible day yet.

The temple of Solomon stood for just over 419 years (from 1005 – 586 BC). The second temple stood for around 585 years (515BC – 70 AD). Both were destroyed on the same day, marked today by the fast of Tisha B'Av (around mid-August). With my birthday at 14 August I remember this Fast above all others by heart. The tribulational temple will likely be built before the Anti-Christ fully reveals himself, possibly after the great Iranian led Invasion referred to in Ezekiel 38-39. It will be flattened with all other cities and buildings world wide during the last great earthquake of the Tribulation Period. Revelation 16:18-21, Zechariah 3:8-9, 14:4-9.

The last Temple on this site, described in Ezekiel 40-47, built by the Lord himself, and with the Lord present in it through His Millennial Reign, will operate right up until just before the present world ends and the new heavens and earth are brought in; it will stand for a thousand years; twice as long as the the main two to date. Revelation 20:4ff.

Verses 4 – 5. These verses contain the specific answer to Solomon's prayer as recorded in chapter 8, verses 25-26. Re-read these verses now. Solomon has prayed that the words of the Lord to David will be honoured in him and his kingdom now. There is a vital principle that the Lord explains to Solomon that we need to get clearly in our minds also; the Lord has no grand-children, He only has children.

Each generation must walk before the Lord in the obedience of their fathers to secure the blessings made to their fathers. The word "if" is the important one to note. If Solomon walks as David walked he will be blessed as David was blessed, but that is not in his sins, but in his righteousness. Notice the words the Lord uses to Solomon.

1. He must walk in integrity (complete obedience, whole-heartedness) of heart.
2. He must walk in uprightness (Justice and Moral Righteousness).
3. He must do all the Lord has commanded him.
4. He must obey the entire law, the Statutes and the Judgements.

If he is obedient in all these things, then he will have descendents who will sit upon his throne, but if he disobeys his descendents will not sit upon his throne, but upon a lesser throne, and the kingdom will eventually be lost to his descendents. Solomon will fail and his sons will fail, and the kingdom will be lost with all its glory, but his last descendent, Joseph of Nazareth, will succeed and be the step father of the son of David who will reign forever.

Verses 6 – 9. The "but" that begins these verses is a big one. If Solomon does not obey the Lord, and walks away to the side of the path of the Lord, then he will reap what he sows, and his sons will also reap the whirlwind he has sown as a result. God could not be clearer to Solomon than He is here. The Bible is clear on this principle of sowing and reaping from beginning to end. Job 4:8, Proverbs 22:8, Hosea 8:7, 10:12, Galatians 6:7-9, Hebrews 12:13.

We must "make our paths straight" in this life and obey the words of the scriptures, or we will not have the blessings of the scriptures. There are "natural and spiritual laws" working out in our lives as they will in the life of Solomon. They still work out in believer's lives today, for blessing or for judgement in time and eternity.

The specific warning is directed at disobedience to the first commandments. Exodus 20:1-7. God alone was to be worshipped; they were to place no other gods alongside the Lord, and were not to share His worship with inferior beings or created things. If they worshipped any thing, being or desire ahead of the Lord the people were told that they would cease to be God's people. They could not complain, for to choose to worship any thing or being other than the Lord proved they had chosen not to be God's people.

God would honour their choice, wait for repentance, but if it was not forthcoming, He would judge them. If they do not honour the one who brought them out of Egypt, they will return to slavery in another place. Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 27-28. The words of the Lord here are a summary repetition of these warning passages from the Mosaic Law. These very words were heard from the lips of the Babylonian general as he led away the last of the captives from the city in 586BC. Jeremiah 40:1-5, 43:11-12, 44:15-28, 45:5.

Verses 10 – 13. Solomon pays Hiram, King of Tyre, in gold and in cities to draw tribute from. Around this time (twenty years into his reign) he assigns twenty cities to Hiram from which he can draw tribute in payment for the great work he has done to support the building projects that have now gone on for twenty years. One city is presented for each of the years Hiram has provided material and manpower, and so he goes to see these cities for himself.

Now whether this Hiram is the same man who befriended David or his son of the same name we cannot be sure 100%, but his reference to Solomon as "his brother" rather than his "son" makes me think they are the same age, and so this Hiram is the son of David's great friend. He is still very positive to Solomon and possibly even more than his father, but he is also careful about funds and resources, and so he checks out these cities and finds they are not worth much.

When he actually sees them with his own eyes they are really inferior places, which will return little to him by way of tribute and produce. Even with good agriculture and close supervision these places are rubbish!

Hiram referred to this entire area given to him as Cabul - meaning "Rubbish Dump", or "Good for Nothing". No mention is made of Solomon's response, but it must have been the proper one, for he still maintains good and close relations with the Phoenicians until the end of his life. It is a lapse of carefulness on Solomon's part that is out of step with his earlier generous payment to his friend and encourager Hiram, and possibly it is a sign that Solomon is running short of funds for the great works he does. Narcissism doesn't count the cost of looking good – its an ominous portent for the future.

Verses 14 – 16. These verses are not at all clear, and we are left to guess at exactly what occurs here. After describing Solomon selling Hiram short, it would be logical for Solomon to pay Hiram the gold, not the other way around. These men were allies and so it is not tribute money, and as Hiram is owed by Solomon my suspicion is that this is a loan from the Phoenicians to Solomon to undertake the work listed after it. This may be the first clue to Solomon's overstepping his financial resources, and may hint at his giving the cities as a desperate measure, and then recognising he cannot fool Hiram with second rate goods, he seeks, and is granted a loan. While this explanation makes sense it is just a speculative assessment at this distance.

Verse 15 refers to the money raised as a "levy" in the KJV, and this indicates a loan that will need to be paid back with interest. There is gold in the Temple treasury but Solomon doesn't want to draw on that. It is in effect his "Federal Reserve" or Central/Reserve Bank, and the wealth stored there is a guarantee for what is raised. The later naval trading scheme he develops from Ezion Geber is able to repay this loan with interest, so the gamble pays off for Solomon at this point, but the burden of taxation and trade levies grows through his reign, and it is not all spent on capital works that benefit and strengthen the kingdom.

The bone fide and possibly militarily useful building projects are listed here:

1. The Temple – for which David provided the money. No loan was needed for this work.
2. The Wall of Jerusalem. This is the new wall to enclose the Temple and the western hills where the palace and other buildings are built. This is the evidence that the city area was extensively expanded during Solomon's time. This was essential work.
3. The fortress that David had built up, the Millo, was rebuilt and strengthened. This was also essential work.
4. Hazor was a major Canaanite fortress, and it had a very large flat area at the top of the Tell (or hill) and upon this he was able to build the northern headquarters for his mobile chariot forces. These were not forces he was meant to have and they would not save his son or his kingdom in the end.
5. Megiddo is the other chariot forces city that was seriously rebuilt as a fortress on the coastal strip.
6. The city of Gezer, given by Pharaoh after he had taken it, was also a strategic fortress, and needed strengthening to stop another easy victory by an attacker. The fact that Pharaoh had led an army so far into the land of Israel to achieve this "wedding present" is a worry in itself and a prelude for the events of twenty five years later.

Missing from the list is the palace of Solomon which took up thirteen valuable years, and much needed resources. This man placed his comfort and magnificence ahead of the military projects. It was a narcissistic sign of things to come. I believe these things are the sign that pride and foolishness had gripped the heart of this wisest of men. He stopped balancing his budget and spent more than he was taking from the people, and he took more than he gave and undermined the stability of the kingdom. A balanced budget is a spiritual sign, overspending on luxury and power projection is always a fruit of the devil's work within, for it undermines the morality of all involved.

Verses 17 – 21. There are more projects that took up time and money, especially for his chariot forces. This is the baffling thing for Solomon to undertake, for the Lord had specifically forbidden such things. Deuteronomy 17:14-20. Solomon could not defeat the Egyptians at their own game, but with tough soldiers he could always defeat their chariot forces, for David always had victory against such forces, for the Lord was with him and he obeyed the Mosaic Law. David had proved the way to win, and yet Solomon builds static defences and chariot armies. Maginot mentality = weak!

Solomon may have been influenced by the Egyptians, but it is always the height of foolishness to work on the enemy's strategic principles! The tying up of vast amounts of money in static defences bankrupted his nation and debilitated the fighting spirit of his men. Solomon built fortresses, even into the desert lands to the south of Judah. He used levies of the Canaanites as his slave work force and they worked to build these fortresses for him. The pagans were made to work for him. While this is bona fide, for these Canaanites were given life in the land as a result. The writer slips in a time comment here indicating he is writing at some time when this situation still existed; that is, he is writing before the Babylonian captivity.

The writer's list is telling us something very important about Solomon's strategic plan, and is making a strong contrast to David's military strategy. The extensive emphasis upon expensive fixed fortifications indicates he has opted for a defensive and therefore negative strategy. Israel had been strong because they went on the attack when they needed to, and depended upon their army in the field not in static lines and high walls. The strength of Israel was meant to be in its tribal levies, with every man in the nation a soldier who was trained and ready to fight well under their local commanders as part of a national army. Low cost solutions were and are always to be preferred. Beware overspending ministries!

Every man was expected to act and think like a soldier in the field, not like a garrison soldier behind a wall. It is a different mentality, and many times in history it has cost a nation its survival; the most recent case was France in 1940, when they trusted in the Maginot Line for their defence rather than fast moving concentrated and hard hitting mobile forces. To

march into open battle requires a mental attitude of faith in God and trust in the man alongside you. It places emphasis upon morale and individual strength of character.

That was God's plan for Israel's forces. When men start to trust fortresses rather than the Lord being their inner fortress, then they are already trusting physical realities rather than spiritual ones. A "Fortress mentality" leads to defeat in all areas of life. "A mighty fortress is our God", and we are to trust in His presence with us, not any high walls around us that we have built. **2 Samuel 22:2, Psalms 18:2, 31:3, 71:3, 91:2, 144:2, Jeremiah 16:19.**

Verses 22 – 24. No Israelites were ever made into slaves by Solomon, but they were given noble task and noble titles. He had 550 key officials in his court who ruled over his administration and army. It was an efficient and thorough administration and gave the land prosperity and peace for forty years. Solomon should have lived and ruled longer. He dies around age sixty, when the allotted span for man is set at seventy and an earlier death must be considered "early". Some die early as far as the span of expected life is concerned but they have done their job upon the earth, but with Solomon we are left wondering whether he dies the "Sin Unto Death".

His primary wife, the Egyptian princess is still only in her late fifties or early sixties when the Egyptian Army conquers Jerusalem five years after Solomon's death. I cannot help thinking that she may have been a centre of intrigue all through her life and finally she sees her people take the city that Solomon built for her. Once the new palace is built, she moves "up" from the old palace in the older City of David and moves into her new quarters, which I suspect were built upon either the area known as Mt Zion to the north of the old city of David, or on the Western Ridge opposite the Tyropoean Valley.

There is a hint in 2 Chronicles 8:11 that the tabernacle for the Ark had been close by David's old palace, and that this was a problem for the queen. Does this mean she was not a believer? Once again we cannot draw too much from this hint that the Chronicler gives, but it raises basic questions about Solomon's strategic thinking. He is the wisest man, and yet he is led astray by his own weakness with women. Once the queen has moved into her palace he rebuilds the Millo fortress in Jerusalem. This may be a clue that the Millo fortress was close to, or part of, the old palace of David, and is to be found close to the northern or eastern walls of the old Jebusite city. Probably found around 2016.

All this building and strengthening work will be proved useless, as the city will fall to Pharaoh easily within five years of Solomon's death. The fact that the queen is mentioned without any indication that Solomon moved in with her is also a worrying omission or is it just that it was so obvious that the writer didn't note it? There is trouble between Solomon and his wives and it will undo him as it did his father David before him, but on a grander and far more disastrous scale. 1 Kings 11:1-10.

Verses 25 – 28. Early in his reign Solomon is careful about the sacrifices and holy feasts to be kept. Three times a year he was obedient to the Lord, and he arranged, and possibly funded the national feasts of Passover/Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Tabernacles. If he funded the provision of sacrifices for these feasts it would have been an outlay of several hundred thousand animals for sacrificial purposes and feasting and a considerable drain on resources, but in this case a truly bona fide one. The feasts were vital means to rebuild national unity which had been fractured for the several hundred years since the Exodus period.

The tabernacle had been a centre for worship for few amongst the people and most offered their sacrifices in the high places close by their dwellings. These high places were converted pagan groves of trees or columns in the centre of which was an altar. It is a dangerous thing when believers try to spiritualise a pagan place. It can be done and done well, as we see with converted taverns being made into churches, but these high places had far greater evils practised upon them than any tavern. The paganism of the high places returned over the years and the simple sacrifices of the Israelites became over time ornate and pagan rituals. By Isaiah's and later Jeremiah's day they were the centres of a thoroughly paganised Judaism and had become a snare to the people. Jeremiah 2:20, 3:2-6, 7:29-31, Ezekiel 6:3-6.

Compromise religion will always run down hill to satanic evil. The "High Places" made people feel spiritual, and in the days of Samuel they had been bona fide places of worship, but they were actually, by this point, satanic deceptions. They were at this time the relics of the past that had no place in the new age with the central Temple to be the sole place of worship. What is legitimate in the past is not necessarily correct/appropriate in the present.

We must be guided by the Holy Spirit into the paths that the Lord wants us to walk in our specific called time period upon the earth. Once the Temple was there the people were to cast aside their high places and worship as a nation in the Temple alone. Things change through the Plan of God and we are to orient to what God wants for our time period, not be stuck in habits and practises of another. Today this means being careful of legalism making inroads into the path of grace that we are called to walk.

The main attack on this front is "Sabbath keeping". Remember we are called to a higher standard than the old Mosaic Law, and that is why we are not to be keeping elements of it. Note just a few things below.

1. Sabbath Law = carry no burdens on the Sabbath, but we are to "cast all our burdens on the Lord" every day.
2. No work was to be done on the Sabbath, but we are to do no "work of the flesh" any day, but every day we are to work in the power of the Holy Spirit alone.
3. They were to rest on that day, but we are to rest in the completed work of God every day and walk in appreciation for the grace of God in creation and salvation.

4. The Sabbath was a day of worship, but every day is to be a day of worship for us, when we remember the blood shed once for all.
5. It was a day when people brought their gifts and prayers, but we are to bring the sacrifices of our time and goods every day to offer ourselves up to the Lord.

Solomon's great naval gamble is described briefly next. The great Naval expedition from Ezion Geber, (beside the modern town of Elath), was an amazing feat of seamanship across and around the Indian Ocean. Just building the ships on this site was an amazing challenge. All the timber had to be ox carted down from Lebanon and assembled on site. It may be that a kit set arrangement was used for the boats, with only final finishing done on the site of the port, or that the entire ship building enterprise of Phoenicia was re-located here for a few years.

Solomon builds a port with warehouses and fortress to defend them, and forms a significant mixed naval fleet here that is sent on a trading and exploration expedition, exploring down the coast of Africa, and across the Indian Ocean possibly to India, Sri Lanka, and possibly as far as the Straits of Malacca for trade. Goods from these places occasionally reached the markets of Palestine by means of the camel caravans, but direct trade was limited, if it existed at all at this time. In later centuries the Arab Dhows would follow the routes discovered and exploited by the Phoenicians under Solomon and Hiram's orders. It may be that the crews comprised Phoenicians from all over the Mediterranean Sea, Arabs from the Arabian and Persian Gulfs, and Israelites also. It appears in the next chapter that the fleet sailed and returned from their voyages on a three year cycle, and it was repeated many times. 1 Kings 10:22.

The exact site of Ophir is still speculated upon. Some argue for the Yemen, where gold abounded and possibly the Queen of Sheba came from, but that is no feat of seamanship, and the preparation for this expedition and possibly the others afterwards would mean a far greater series of objectives was in mind. Solomon wanted to reach lands as yet unexploited and find the gold that would pay back his investment in the expedition, and repay all his debts also. This was a serious risk taking expedition to try to find the gold that would save the nation from bankruptcy, and it came off! Sadly he didn't use the time it bought and balance his budget – he kept unsustainably spending.

The return on the investment for the first voyage of discovery and trade was at least 420 talents of gold. The writer of Chronicles records 450 talents being Solomon's share of the loot gained. 2 Chronicles 8:18. A Talent was 3000 shekels, or around 115 pounds each. This makes every talent 1840 ounces. To work out how much this is in your own place and time, just obtain the value of an ounce of gold and multiply it by 1840, and that is your value for one talent of gold, and then multiply again by 420 or 450, and that is the total profit on the expedition. This was a greatly successful expedition.

As at 2008, with gold at \$800.00 per ounce, the total worth of this project (either the first, or all voyages in total – we can't be sure) was over 618 million dollars. This is a summary account of things that at the time were fully recorded elsewhere, but the details were lost as a result of the Babylonian Captivity. We are not told all the things we would love to know about this project, but it opens the door to the east and Africa for trade in exotic goods as well as the gold that was so desired by men. 1 Kings 10:22.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. The basic spiritual laws that underpin this creation still operate today. If we sow obedience to God's Word we will reap blessing in accordance with God's Word. If we sow disobedience we will reap the disasters that are associated with sin and evil. If we sow lust for money, power, approval, or wrongful sex, then we will reap earthly and very temporary pleasures, but eternal regrets and judgement. Let us select as objects for our desire the things that matter before the Lord, and last forever. Let us walk in the spirit and so reap spiritual opportunities in time and rewards in eternity.

2. Let us maintain a healthy scepticism regarding those who announce that they are receiving regular specific revelations from the Lord. These things are very rare and those receiving them ought to be "very scared", for it means that they are expected to do a mighty work and there is great significance in that work. Let us ensure that the Lord speaks to us daily through the ministries of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, but let us be very careful of those who claim too much spiritual power, for experience through history teaches that it is normally from the wrong side! Remember the Lord's words in Matthew 7:13-20, and John's in his letter, 1 John 4:1-19.

3. Did Pharaoh's daughter have to wait twenty years for her house? We don't know the answer to this question, but we do know that the Lord waited for eight years before answering Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple in a full and final way. Let us wait with patience for the Lord to speak to us and give us the answers to our hearts desires, and let us with patience walk in obedience to Him and His Holy Word.

4. God has no grand-children. Each generation stands before the Lord alone. We all stand before the Lord either in obedience or disobedience. Let us stand for truth, in the truth. It is far easier to live an honest life for you don't then have to waste energy remembering which lie you told to which person! Let us be honest before the Lord and men.

REFLECTION UPON SATANIC RELIGION

1. Satan's religion is a humanly acceptable one: no sin, no judgement, no Saviour and no Hell. Satan appears as an angel of light, and always places his best people in churches. (2 Corinthians 11:13-19,26)

2. Many pastors in the churches are servants of Satan's policy, knowingly or unknowingly. (Isaiah 30:12, Jeremiah 2:8, 2 Peter 2:1-10)
3. Satan's strategy towards unbelievers is to keep them blinded to the true gospel, and hook them into alternatives. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Colossians 2:8, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)
4. Satan's strategy towards believers is:-
 - a) To confuse by false teaching. (Matthew 7:15, Romans 16:18)
 - b) To appeal to pride. (2 Corinthians 10:12)
 - c) To promote idolatry. (Habakkuk 2:18,19)
 - d) To promote legalism. (1 Timothy 1:7-8)
5. Satan's policy calls for counterfeit faith:-
 - a) Counterfeit gospel. (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)
 - b) Counterfeit pastors. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
 - c) Counterfeit communion. (1 Corinthians 10:19-21)
 - d) Counterfeit doctrine. (2 Timothy 4:1)
 - e) Counterfeit righteousness. (Matthew 19:16-28)
 - f) Counterfeit way of life. (Matthew 23)
 - g) Counterfeit power. (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)
 - h) Counterfeit gods. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

THE SABBATH AND THE LORD'S DAY

1. Sabbath means Rest.
2. Salvation is the eternal Sabbath. (Matthew 11:28) - we must trust in God to save us, apart from our own works.
3. Trusting in the promises is the daily Sabbath. (Hebrews 3:11) - we must trust in God to provide all our needs.
4. The original Sabbath (Genesis 2:2, 3) God finished His work of creation on the sixth day and rested on the seventh.
5. The Sabbath of Israel. (Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-15)
 - a) In the Old Testament, the Jews were commanded not to work on the seventh day. They were to trust in the finished work of God to supply their needs.
 - b) The Sabbath (Saturday) was the remembrance day of the old creation, of the old covenant. (Exodus 20:10-11, 31:12-17, Hebrews 4:4)
 - c) Legalists burdened the Sabbath with many hundreds of extra-biblical commandments and regulations.
 - d) Under the Mosaic Law the Jews had a sabbatical year; they were supposed to rest every seventh year. (Exodus 23:10, 11)
 - e) Because they did not take their sabbaticals they endured the 70 years of Babylonian captivity. (Leviticus 26:33-35, 2Chronicles 36:20, 21, Daniel 9:2, Jeremiah 25:11, 12, Jeremiah 29:10)
6. The Sabbath spoke of the Old Creation Exodus 20, 31 and Hebrews 4 - the Lord's day speaks of the New Creation - Saturday belongs to Israel, the family of God, Sunday belongs to the Church the royal family of God. Matthew 28:9, Galatians 6:15, Hebrews 9:15, 10:20
7. The Lord's Day
 - a) The Lord's Day (Sunday) is the remembrance of the new creation, the resurrection life of the Church in Christ. (2Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Hebrews 9:15, 10:20)
 - b) In the New Testament, all days are as unto the Lord. (Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 4:1-3)
 - c) There is a moment by moment Sabbath for the believer in the Church Age. (Hebrews 4:1-3)
8. Why is Sunday so important?
 - a) Sunday is resurrection day Matthew 28:1,
 - b) It was also the day of the first meeting of the disciples John 20:19,
 - c) It was the first day they received instructions from the Lord Luke 24:36-39
 - d) It was the day the church began as the day of Pentecost was always on a Sunday Acts 2,

- e) It was the day the early church met Acts 20:6-7
- f) It was the day to give offerings 1 Corinthians 16:2.

9. This day has been blessed by God. If the church was wrong on meeting on a Sunday the Lord would have pointed it out before the Seventh Day Adventists came on the scene.

10. There is no such thing as a Christian Sabbath Ephesians 4:1-3, Romans 12:1,2 -every day should be lived as unto the Lord, lived in the filling of the Holy Spirit. We meet on the Lord's day when we celebrate our new birth, the Lord's victory, the birth of the Church. There are no particular rules, a day of joy, rejoicing and celebration.

11. The concept of the moment by moment Sabbath is illustrated in four passages in the Old Testament

- a) Moses at the Red Sea (Exodus 14:10-14)
- b) Abraham (Romans 4:17-21, Genesis 22, Hebrews 11:17-19)
- c) The bones of Joseph (Hebrews 11:22)
- d) Caleb and the Giants (Numbers 13,14, Joshua 14:6-14, 15:14, Judges 1:20)

NOTES

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION

Solomon appears to be going from strength to strength. This man can do no wrong financially and politically; or at least that is how things look on the surface. The visit from the Queen of Sheba (possibly Yemen or Ethiopia) is a highlight for the writer and shows just how far afield this man's wisdom and grandeur is admired, and also how much Solomon received by way of exceptional gifts from others. This man was truly under the blessing of God at this point in his reign. The time frame for this queen's visit is at some time around, or just after, the twenty year point in his reign.

His trading enterprises are extensive through this time, and he controls trade through the Palestine area, taking a tax on everything that goes through his land. He grows wealthy as he "clips the ticket" on all trade flowing around him. He has been building wealth for his nation, and using it for capital works, and for himself. He faces temptations with wealth that we can scarcely contemplate, and only those who have faced this level of temptation can really comment upon the pressures. American President Bill Clinton faced this and fell in a similar way as Solomon, and his famous statement afterwards summed it up. He said, "I did this because I could".

Let us read through this list of great achievements and wealth, and ponder our own attitude to money and the things it can buy in our journey through this brief time upon the earth.

1 KINGS 10:1-29

1 And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions. 2 And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. 3 And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not. 4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, 5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. 6 And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. 7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. 8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. 9 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice. 10 And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. 11 And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones. 12 And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day. 13 And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants. 14 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, 15 Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country. 16 And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred shekels of gold went to one target. 17 And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon. 18 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. 19 The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays. 20 And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom. 21 And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. 22 For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. 23 So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. 24 And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 25 And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year. 26 And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem. 27 And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance. 28 And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. 29 And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 3. The queen hears of this great king to the north from traders. While news travelled slowly in the ancient world, it did travel along the trade routes, and both Yemen and Ethiopia were places that traded with Israel through either Arabia or Egypt. From the response of the queen that is described here we will get a clue as to the likely origin of "Sheba", but it is not conclusive. Notice that her intrigue is based around the "name of the Lord" in whom Solomon's wisdom rests. It is a spiritual quest that drives her as much as a desire to meet the wisest man of her age. In this day there was a hunger amongst the rulers to have "wise" people around them whose wisdom was tested in debate with others, and they desired only the best to assist them as their counsellors.

The queen arrived in Jerusalem with vast wealth herself as a gift to Solomon. No-one arrived empty handed in that day, unlike the rudeness of our own day! No believer ought ever to arrive at any place with empty hands or wallet; we ought always to be seeking to be a blessing to others, and to bring blessing to them. She also comes with many questions for Solomon; she comes prepared with clear objectives. This woman is an earnest seeker after truth, and she finds it. She illustrates the power that ruling women held in this day. Women were not all locked away behind veils and powerless in this day or later ones. Read through Proverbs 31 and be challenged with a view of a real leading woman from the ancient world, and you will see that she is strong, intelligent, powerful, and an able and independent business woman.

This woman is a mighty ruler in her own right. Solomon meets all her questions, answers them with amazing wisdom, and encourages her with knowledge of the Lord. She is staggered at the wisdom she finds, and the Ethiopian traditions record she converts to Judaism and brings the faith back to her land.

The Ethiopian Jews, (now in the land of Israel), trace their own spiritual ancestry back to this conversion of their monarch through the ministry of Solomon to her. They claim that Solomon sent some of his people with her on the journey back and the Ethiopians were taught the traditions of the Law of Moses. The physical evidence of so many people in Ethiopia practising an ancient form of Judaism for so long does lend weight to Ethiopia being the place she came from. It was from there that the later rulers sent their leading counsellors and administrators to the second Temple, and one of them is converted to Christianity by Philip. Acts 8:26-40.

Many argue the other position however, that it was a kingdom of Yemen that was the origin of this woman. Yemen was also a centre of the gold, precious stones, and spice trades, and these are the gifts that she brings. There are also traditions there that locals would trace back to Solomon's day. The problem with all these traditions is that they may have been invented in Moslem days specifically to tie back to one of the great men whom the Moslems also recognise as a great saint of the past. It is the existence of the Ethiopian Jews that lends more weight to their claims.

Verses 4 – 9. This woman was a very self assured and confident ruler. She expected to find a flaw in Solomon's wisdom and find that he was not what others had said he was. She had likely, as all of us have at times, been disappointed with people who were previously "talked up" to us. She met Solomon and tested his wisdom, and she closely watched his entire court process and she was left with nothing but absolute respect for him and all he did. As we would say, "she had the wind taken out of her sails".

Notice the things she observed closely. Some things may initially strike you as strange, but look closer, for they give evidence of her intelligence in assessing Solomon. She was looking at the spirit and soul of the nation behind the man Solomon. This woman is a very efficient and effective auditor of administrations and people. She is a careful and wise woman.

She noticed in order:

1. His wisdom – which showed his abstract and academic expertise.
2. His building works, which showed his ability to manage projects to their completion, and his practical application of theoretical wisdom.
3. His provision of food for himself and his court, which showed how well organised his court was, and how cultured the tastes of the people were.
4. The demeanour of his servants told her that he was respected and ran a positive and popular kingdom, with good esprit de corps and discipline amongst his staff.
5. The character, bearing and ability of his counsellors indicated the depth of talent he had to draw upon for his government.
6. The wealth, style, care, and cleanliness of the clothing of Solomon's advisors spoke of their culture, their self respect, and their dignity. This was not a nouveau riche court of peasants trying to be lords. These men had real style and were comfortable with their success and their wealth and their position as lords.
7. The cup bearers were the trusted tasters of food to guard against poisoning, and their bearing showed the courage and the relaxed confidence of this court.
8. She also noticed the way Solomon walked up to the Temple mount when he went to prayer and worship. She noticed the dignity and spirituality of this man, and she was totally and completely impressed by him as a king and as a man.

In all these observations we see Solomon at his best. This time in his reign is the peak of his physical and spiritual powers. He is still walking with the Lord here, and the observations of this woman illustrate that. Our writer will move on in this chapter, and in the next chapter, to tell us just how far he falls later, but at this point he is still on the path of life to which the Lord called him. He is a living example of greatness, wisdom and spiritual power and influence, and if she is indeed queen of Ethiopia, then Solomon's influence will flow onwards for millennia.

The queen openly acknowledges her amazement and her admiration for this great king. She notes that she could not believe the reports that she had received of his life and his kingdom, but now she sees that all she heard was true and that far more was true also. This is around half way through his reign and so he is a man of forty at this point and he is still an impressive man who is focused upon the true tasks of kingship. As king he is responsible for righteousness and justice for his people, and he is praised for his fulfilment of this task by her. Proverbs 3:13-26. He has clearly not been side tracked too far by the pleasures of the flesh at this point, but the corner is starting to turn as we will see below.

She praises him and notes that happy are the people that serve this man and those that live under the shadow of his magnificence. This is a very Middle Eastern blessing and tells us that she is both being very formal, but also very admiring in her words. She then acknowledges the Lord God of Israel and speaks as if she is a convert at this point. Her words in verse 11 indicate a theological grasp of the nature, character and plan of God that tells us that this woman has met the Lord, possibly through her visit. It would certainly appear that Solomon has led her to the Lord in his time with her. Where is the Egyptian Queen, Solomon's wife, in all this? Well might we ask!

Verses 10 – 13. Her gift is as magnificent as it could be. She delivers a gift that indicates a significant alliance and trading arrangement is being made, and possibly much more. One hundred and twenty talents of gold in today's terms, with gold at \$800-00 per ounce, is worth around \$176 million! This is a staggering amount of wealth to deliver as a present! In addition to this she gave him countless precious stones, and vast quantities of spices from Africa/Arabia. This wealth sounds suspiciously like a marriage dowry also, and it may be that the Ethiopian tradition that they married

may be correct, for the Ethiopians trace their line of kings from the child born to the queen after marrying Solomon and then returning to her land.

This was not an unusual thing in the ancient world, when a king married a ruling queen, that one would have to return to their land after the wedding. They would spend some time together to ensure there was an heir for one or the other from the union, but then separate. In the queen's case, she wanted the "best genetic stock" to have her heir from and this was the best man in the world to procreate with. That, in any case, is the traditional Ethiopian version of events, and we are too far away to be able to make the judgement. Having received the goods, and possibly being with child to him, the queen leaves Israel and most likely never returns. The visit of the Ethiopian Eunuch a thousand years later proves regular contacts were however maintained through the years by the rulers of Ethiopia with the Temple in Jerusalem.

The magnificence of this gift from the Queen of Sheba would be worthy of notice in any account of Solomon's reign, but, if the Ethiopian tradition is indeed true, then the seeking of this great woman for a king who was worthy of her for "breeding purposes" may have started Solomon on the serious path of fornication later in his reign. The writer will make the point strongly in the next chapter, that this is the path that leads to the final dissolution of his kingdom. Once again we cannot know for sure, but notice what our writer mentions next, for he is weaving a story here that is designed to explain why the kingdom fell apart so quickly, and went from master of the Middle East, to slave of Egypt in five years. The next item mentioned is the naval expeditions of Hiram and Solomon which gathered pace around this time.

Our writer has already mentioned the great exploration project from Ezion Geber, but now he notes that from the Phoenician coast the naval trading fleets also headed to the west, possibly as far as Spain and England. There is evidence that the Phoenicians traded tin from Britain in the thousand years before Christ and this is the first historic mention of this activity. The writer notes that they went on three year voyages from the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon to the far side of the Mediterranean Sea and probably through the "Pillars of Hercules" (Gibraltar) into the Atlantic coast of Africa and Europe in search of exotic cargoes, taking their purple dyed cloth and spices from Arabia to trade for skins, tin, copper, and other valuables that they then sold at high prices in the Mediterranean area.

There are some interesting cargoes described here, and most have Indian Ocean origins. Firstly is the "almug tree". From this tree Solomon made pillars for the house of God and for his own palace, and he also used them for the making of musical instruments. As this requires special grained wood, and it was very rare clearly, for our writer notes that outside the musical instruments that have survived from this time, and the four pillars, this wood has never been seen again in Israel. What was it? It appears to have been sandalwood (*Santalum album*), and it came from Malabar off the Indian Coast. This is one of the products that came from India, and proves that Solomon and Hiram's sailors got there for one voyage at least, and brought back this wood. The next trade goods give us other locations they visited.

Verses 14 – 20. Every year the weight of gold that came into the kingdom was enormous. The writer indicates that around 666 talents of gold value came in each year. This appears to be actual gold that enters the kingdom and it is the result of some very large gold mining operations in Africa, Arabia and beyond. Once again in our terms, this was, at \$800-00 per ounce, around 980 million dollars annually of gold alone, besides all the spices and other valuable goods.

Our writer notes that all the kings of the Arabian Peninsula were in trading arrangements with Solomon and all benefited from the trade they had with him. It is a reminder that the Hebrews and the Arabs have not always been at war, and in commerce they have had many centuries when they worked closely together for their mutual benefit.

With the gold he received Solomon made 200 "targets" of small shields of solid gold to hang in the palace and temple. Each shield may have weighed 17.5 pounds. Each shield would be worth in pure gold around \$224,000-00; that is a quarter of the million dollars per shield! He had 200 of these small shields and 300 larger ones hanging on his walls! Is this extravagance or is it extravagance? It is **not a sign of godly living**, for God's people are to be humble, not extravagant. All this did was build envy in others and their determination to seize such things, and pharaoh did exactly that within five years of Solomon's death.

This is sadly a sign that greed, arrogance, and lack of appreciation for the needs of his people, (maybe even a disconnection between him and his people) was starting to occur. Remember also that his people are still being taxed heavily through this time, and he did not slacken off the taxation demands, and this greed for wealth and the showy, ostentatious display of it will lead to rebellion later, and all these shields will be taken by Pharaoh Shishak of Egypt. 1 Kings 12:6-16, 14:26.

He filled the hall of the Cedars of Lebanon with the shields so that the gold shone against the panelled rooms. He then had an ivory and gold throne made for himself. This would have been made of stone or wood and then overlaid with ivory and gold inlay. It would have shone and dazzled all who saw it. He raised himself up on this throne six steps above the hall floor so all looked up to him. The days of the king sitting with his men were over; all now lifted up their eyes to his magnificence. Arrogance and pride is starting to get hold of Solomon's heart.

There is a saying today that the greatest danger of success is starting to believe your own publicity machine! Sadly this is where Solomon gets after the mid point in his reign. His son Rehoboam is one year old when Solomon starts to reign and is in his twenties at this point, and so his next twenty years are in the spoiled atmosphere of a wealth saturated court that is out of touch with the needs of the ordinary people, and he is 100% arrogance as we saw in the 1 Kings 12 passage, and as a result he loses the kingdom his father had built up.

The throne was magnificent and a wonder of art and beauty with its carved lions, but God wanted his men to be lions within their hearts for Him, not have them carved into their furniture! No king had a throne like this anywhere in the world of the day, but it was a sign of the shift in his heart away from the Lord! The reality of a lion hearted ruler was slipping away with the luxuries that were starting to preoccupy Solomon's mind after the heady days of the Queen of Sheba's visit. It is said by some when people have painted pictures of Jesus on their walls it is only because they have lost his real presence in their hearts. Let us beware of worshipping wealth and what it can buy, for none of it lasts for eternity.

Verses 21 – 25. Gold was as common in this household as pottery was in most noble homes of the day. No vessels were made of silver for the king's table; all were of gold. His drinking cups were beaten gold, and all the eating utensils in the "house of the forests of Lebanon", his political centre, were of gold to impress guests and dazzle visiting dignitaries. This was a use of wealth that was excessive, even for that day. It was simply loot for the taking later.

Pharaoh Shishak seized much of Solomon's gold but a great deal escaped his looting, and these goblets and plates possibly were amongst those that escaped, for there was so much else that took his attention. This gold would eventually end up in Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar's capture of Jerusalem. All these vessels would be returned by Cyrus the Great. Ezra 1:7-11. The only other king that is spoken of as living this way with drinking vessels of gold was King Belshazzar, the last king of Babylon, and he was judged dramatically for drinking out of possibly these very goblets. Daniel 5:1-30. We are in bad company when we resemble such evil men.

Ephesians 5:1-5. *"1. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
2. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.
3. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;
4. Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.
5. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."*

The excesses of Solomon's later reign are now seen further in verses 22 and following. The ships sent out from Ezion Geber and from Tyre and Sidon brought in all sort of exotic produce. The two items I want you to notice are the "apes and peacocks". Neither have any purpose at all in the rulership of the kingdom before the Lord. The apes are either true Apes from the African Coast of what is now Kenya or Tanzania, or they are from the coast of North Africa, (Barbary Apes), and so either way we have an indication of how far south or west Solomon's sea farers went. The peacocks come from southern Asia. They may have been purchased from India, but were more commonly found in Thailand and further south east. This is another indication of how far Solomon's men went to find exotic items for trading. The ivory was probably from Africa, but may also have come from India, Thailand, or China; all of which specialised in the carving of ivory.

People were so impressed by Solomon's reputation that many kings sent presents just to be known as a "friend" of Solomon. Gifts from far and wide arrived year by year in Jerusalem from kings all over the known world, and this was because they had heard of this man, and sought his wisdom, or even any form of association with him, in even the most minor manner. As today foolish men and women seek to have their photographs taken with past Presidents of countries, so in this day they sought fame by association with a man like Solomon. He was an "A List" celebrity and like many in Hollywood today, he was changed by the experience, and became someone he was not at the beginning. Proverbs 23:7.

Verses 26 – 28. **Deuteronomy 17:16-20** had made very clear that no king of Israel was ever to "multiply horses", for the people of Israel were not to fight in professional armies, but as citizen armies. They were not to allow the knights who rode the horses to rule them, but they were to defeat them in battle by walking with God. Israel was to have infantry, but not the expensive cavalry and chariot forces.

Solomon was influenced by the nations around him and he went for the very expensive glamour forces of cavalry and chariots that would lead to an arrogant aristocracy ruling over them. He gathered significant chariot and cavalry forces and these required great resources from the national economy to support. God's plan was for brave men, Holy Spirit led, to be their soldiers, led by equals, but Solomon built up an aristocracy not a meritocracy!

He also imported special horses and linen from Egypt, and planted cedars on the high country for future use in building projects. He held the royal monopoly on linen and then on-sold it locally and to foreign nations and made a profit. Solomon also ran a business of trading in chariots and horses to other kingdoms round about. In today's terms he went into the "Arms Business". The writer mentions the prices of the chariots and horses that he held the monopoly trade licence for, and clearly it was a lucrative trade with other kingdoms, but it was not the job of the king to run businesses to make money for him self unless it assisted his people.

As has already been noted above, the taxation burden upon his people was still heavy, and so the benefit to the nation was zero from all this wheeling and dealing. It was all a side track from the focused holiness to which he had been called, and he steadily forgot the words of the Lord that he had received at the beginning, and again at the twenty year point in his reign. He was walking slowly, but steadily away from the Mosaic Law, and so he was walking away from the blessing of God. The next chapter records just how far he got away from the Lord's path. Matthew 7:13-14, Luke 13:24. He was walking away from the "narrow way" of God's path, into the "broad way" of "dead works". Hebrews 9:14.

As I have written these words above I have been listening to the singing of the Irish Christian singer Robin Mark. As I finished this section he was singing his song, "When all is said and done". Some of the words are - "When alls been said and done,

There is just one thing that matters,
Did I do my best to live for truth?,
Did I live my life for you?,
When its all been said and done,
All my treasures will be nothing,
Only what I've done for love's reward will stand the test of time."

Solomon understands these words over time and writes the book of Ecclesiastes to express his deep emptiness as he contemplates his wealth and his consistent abuse of it. Sadly he never truly repents of his worship of wealth and pleasure, and so it destroys his final witness and the legacy of his materialism weakens the kingdom itself.

I also recall Jesus words from Mark 8:36-37, "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Solomon gained the greatest wealth he could, but he lost his true self; he lost his own soul. Let us not envy this man in anything, and let us not follow after the modern version of his philosophy the evil "prosperity gospel", for it is as lying and deceitful as this man's life sadly became. Ecclesiastes 2:18-19, Philippians 4:8-13, 1 Timothy 6:9.

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. Great wealth is not necessarily great evil. It is not wealth that is evil, but the love of it above the love for God. Solomon did well for over twenty years, but then he turns after the use of wealth for his own pleasure and self centred pleasures. His heart was led away by pleasure and so he lost real joy. This is the challenge of Solomon's life directly into our own daily choices. Will we "hold the line" for God, and walk His path only, or will we get distracted by the pleasures of the flesh and walk as do ordinary unsaved men?

2. Let us walk with the Lord and pour all we have out to the Lord. John Wesley gives a good contrast to Solomon, for in his later life he made the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of dollars every year from his writing. He could have lived a millionaire life style and moved into a flash house and had carriages to ride in but he did not! Every week he made sure he had a zero balance in his bank; he made sure all the money he received was poured out in the Lord's work. He focused all his wealth on taking the burdens off God's people so that they could do more for the Lord. Let us be like John Wesley, and let us learn from the sadness of Solomon that the prosperity gospel is from the pit of hell itself.

Notes

CHAPTER 11**INTRODUCTION**

This is one of the saddest chapters in the Bible. Some will challenge me on this and speak of the chapters that describe the Cross as the saddest chapters, and while I will whole heartedly agree that the greatest pain in the history of mankind is that of the Cross, there is triumph there as the result of the things Jesus Christ our Lord did. The great sadness of this chapter before us is that there is no triumph, only disaster, death, and destruction that flows from Solomon's reign, and the history of Judah is heading steadily downhill thereafter.

Solomon is initially very wise, but later in his reign he does not follow his own wisdom. He knows the truth and yet he does not follow after it, for he relaxed into his comforts. He speaks to his sons about the dangers of sexual immorality and yet he falls into the very "honey trap" he warns his sons of. **Proverbs 2:1-22, 5:3-23, 6:23-33, 7:5-23**. Read these very powerful, truthful and direct words, and then reflect on the things that the writer unfolds before us in this chapter.

Solomon was clearly writing these words in Proverbs early in his reign while still on the path of righteousness, but at some point after the mid-point in his reign he departs from the path of truth and enters the deceptive path of pleasure for its own sake. He becomes a fool and in his foolishness he sows the seeds that grow the weeds that choke the life out of his kingdom. All he has built will be lost because of his lust based, and pride-arrogance centred sins.

1 KINGS 11:1-43

But King Solomon loved many strange women together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites: 2 Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. 7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. 8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. 9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, 10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. 11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. 12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. 13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen. 14 And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom. 15 For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom; 16 (For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom:) 17 That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad being yet a little child. 18 And they arose out of Midian, and came to Paran: and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him an house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land. 19 And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen. 20 And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh. 21 And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. 22 Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing: howbeit let me go in any wise. 23 And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah: 24 And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them of Zobah: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus. 25 And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria. 26 And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king. 27 And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father. 28 And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. 29 And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: 30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: 31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: 32 (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes

of Israel:) 33 Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. 34 Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: 35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. 36 And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. 37 And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. 38 And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. 39 And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever. 40 Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. 41 And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? 42 And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. 43 And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

REFLECTIONS

Verses 1 – 3. The Beatles had a song in the 1960s that said, “Love is all you need”, but they were lying lyrics as Solomon illustrates. Love for another, without being equally focused spiritually forward in life is always wrong and destructive. Solomon genuinely “loved” these women, but it was a lust driven operation, and he had the money and the palace to secure their ready response to his attentions. His love making to all these beautiful women became his focus in life and he failed to deal with the three big military problems (below) that were to unravel the political situation after his death. He failed to see what was happening and take the dynamic action that was required, because he always had a beautiful woman who wanted to make love to him, and he had the opportunity, and he took it.

When sex or any lust rules our thinking, be we men or women, we will be destroyed over time. Love without spiritual equality is destructive of both morality and mental stability. Any number of sexual partners above the one God has for us is called by the Lord adultery! The writer identifies that the women “turned away his heart” from the Lord, but the women are not held responsible by the Lord, Solomon is, and he is to be judged, as we will see below.

These women did not become believers, and Solomon failed to require it, and then went further and allowed them to worship gods who were no gods, and then joined them in their paganism and compromised his own faith. Psalms 96:4-5, Isaiah 37:12-19, Galatians 4:3-11. He had multiplied horses, which had been forbidden by God, and he went far further with these foreign women, which was even more strongly forbidden. Exodus 23:32-33, 34:16, Deuteronomy 7:3-4, Joshua 23:12-13.

The Word of God was absolutely clear and it remains the standard; no believer is ever to marry an unbeliever and so compromise their earthly and eternal future. 2 Corinthians 6:14. Solomon just loved these exotic and interesting women, but our writer has already prepared us for this; he also loved exotic things like apes and peacocks also! Solomon has become a “collector”. He has moved marriage to an activity rather than a relationship that builds a family and a nation with stability. This treatment of the divine institution of marriage as just a sexual arrangement would lead to vast carnage for all his people.

Literally tens of thousands will die as a result of Solomon’s actions. Many today argue that sexual immorality is a private matter, but it is not at all, for the actions done in private always overflow into society and the destruction unleashed led in this case to the collapse of the nation and the invasions that followed, with tens of thousands of people killed and injured and the entire economy ruined. The cause of all the carnage was simply because Solomon took his eye off the role of a king and became a harem master. Solomon didn’t need these women, and he knew it, for that is the very subject of the Song of Solomon! It is the sad commentary on the pointlessness and emptiness of adultery and promiscuity.

This much maligned little book is a crucial piece of evidence regarding Solomon’s bad choices, for it demonstrates that Solomon knew he had been wrong, yet he persisted in his sexual pleasure taking and his pagan worship at times to satisfy his wife’s desires. As we put it today, “He blew it!” He lost his kingdom for the sake of his sexual pleasures, ignoring all his advice he had given to his own sons. It is no wonder that they later went off the rails. No parent who is immoral ever needs to feel baffled about why their children go off the rails into immorality later, for they have simply followed their parents bad example. They have acted like monkeys and - “Monkey see – Monkey do!”

Verses 4 – 8. As Solomon grew older he did not settle more firmly into his faith and practise it firmly; rather he went astray into the pagan rites of the gods of the nations that David had defeated. He dies around age sixty, so he is not an old man when all this is happening, but he has clearly become soft and pathetic by the end and is not the strong man the queen of Sheba so admired at the mid-point of his reign.

As a man in his fifties he should have been in the peak of his mental and physical powers, but the heart disease that felled David at seventy appears to have felled Solomon at sixty. This may be due to what we call today “life style factors”, but God’s verdict is such things are “evils”. He apparently didn’t serve in the Armed Forces and remain physically fit, and

he clearly loved good food and ate lots of it, and physical inactivity with rich food = death at sixty! The writer is clear on this point; Solomon did evil in the sight of God and he is judged for it and dies young. It is the "Sin Unto Death" he dies.

The ultimate evil is that having built the great temple, he then built "High Places" to the three most degraded of the local pagan gods(also below verse 33). He actively encouraged their pagan sacrifices rather than correcting them and guiding them towards the true faith. He did all this for sex! His actions were disgraceful and brought the judgement of God upon him so that no son of his was to sit permanently upon the throne of David; they would have temporary title only. Sadly many of his sons will follow him into the same base paganism he played with here.

Verses 9 – 13. God had appeared to this man twice and told him the truth about his life and destiny, and all he had to do was be obedient to the commands of the Lord his God. It wasn't that difficult to follow the Lord, for he had given Solomon everything. Had he simply lived in praise to the Lord he would have been blessed into his eighties, but he chased sex and other pleasures instead of following truth. God hates sin and his anger boiled over towards Solomon and all who followed him into this evil. We are not here on earth to grow fat, unfit, lazy and decadent; we are here to serve!

He had been told by both the Mosaic Law and direct revelation not to go after other gods and he had disobeyed the direct orders of the Lord. 2 Chronicles 7:17-22. There was no remedy for him once he had gone this far; he was to die the "SIN UNTO DEATH". The third time the Lord speaks to Solomon is to judge him. God is not mocked by man's sin. We have the opportunity to serve and be blessed, but if we select the path of disobedience, then we will receive all we have asked for by our evil actions. Numbers 14:18-24, 35, 1 Samuel 2:30-34, 13:13-14, 15:22-29, 2 Samuel 12:9-14.

The lives and failings of Saul and David were well known, and Solomon was without excuse for his evil, and with his great wisdom, he was also without excuse for he fully understood the consequences of such sins. The lessons flowing from the two early kings was clear; God would punish sin and evil, but He would forgive genuine repentance. Psalms 51. It would appear that Solomon never repented of his sin and evil, but kept on practising the pagan religions possibly until the end. This man appears to die the "Sin Unto Death", but I expect to see him in heaven, but he will be there without any of the eternal rewards that such a man could have enjoyed. He wasted his life, and his wasted life led to the destruction of many others through the centuries. Solomon's legacy is catastrophic for Judah and Israel!

The result of his sin was that the kingdom would be torn away from him, and the ten northern tribes would be given to another, with his son left only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The only reason Solomon does not see this judgement come in his life time is because of the love of the Lord for David. The only blessing he receives in all this is blessing by association with his father David. This man could have been personally blessed above all men for all his life, and for generations to come the nation could have been strong, but for the thrills of sex, power and wealth, he threw it all away. He is a picture of what might have been spiritually, but carnality cast it all away.

Verses 14 – 22. There were three serious enemies for Solomon in his reign, and building fortresses, and developing cavalry, and chariot forces was not the answer to any of them. The enemies of Israel were defeated by David and Joab by sheer hard fighting with infantry forces and that was God's plan for His people. They were to fight as infantry in faith that the Lord would be with them as they fought the right battles. God's purpose was that they draw close to Him; that they pray and seek the Lord's face as to the means and strategies to deal with their enemies, and then walk obediently to victory. Solomon sought a more political and "normal" path to victory and spent large amounts of wealth on things that couldn't save him, but looked good. He had not learned from his father's words. Psalms 20:7.

The first great enemy of Solomon was Hadad the Edomite. This man was a survivor from the elimination policy of David and Joab of the Edomites. They had been evil in their dealings with the Israelites and a policy of extermination of all rebels had been followed by ruthless old Joab, but the young king escaped. 2 Samuel 8:13-14. This man escapes and flees to Egypt, and as you read these verses recall the alliance of Solomon with Egypt and the "wedding gift" of Gezer. 1 Kings 3:1, 9:16-17.

Solomon had no business establishing an alliance with the pharaoh of Egypt who was harbouring and training his enemy. Notice how devious pharaoh was in equipping this Edomite and sending him back to harry Solomon's southern flank through all his reign. It was a sign of danger for later and needed urgent military attention, but Solomon was distracted with women, one of whom was an Egyptian spy – his wife! The servants of the Edomite king gather other raiders from Midian and Paran and gain pharaoh's active support (verse 18). This pharaoh is actively encouraging the defeat of Solomon's kingdom long term, and yet pretending he is an ally.

Not only does pharaoh like the young Hadad, he makes him a relative by giving him his own senior wife's sister for his wife. There was no stronger way of making this man Egypt's ally. By this means pharaoh has ensured that the Edomite kingdom will be half Egyptian in future and owe their allegiance to him. We are even given the names of the specific queen here and of Hadad's son who will reign after him. Once David and Joab are dead Hadad seeks pharaoh's permission to return and build up Edomite power again. The pharaoh wants to keep him a little longer, but finally grants his request and he returns to stir up trouble there for Solomon. It may be that pharaoh pretended that the Edomites had been cast out of his land, and that he sought an alliance with Solomon only, but it was all politics and deception.

Solomon needed to secure good intelligence and keep himself safe by seeking the Lord's guidance through prayer and prophets. He would have then discovered he needed to guard his kingdom against Egypt and invade and destroy Edom while he had the chance. Hadad's descendent will cause trouble for the Son of David nearly a thousand years later, for that descendent is called in history Herod the Great.

Verses 23 – 28. The second enemy through Solomon's reign was Rezon. He was a survivor of the battles David fought in the area around Damascus, described in 2 Samuel 8:3-14. This man established himself as king over Damascus with the survivors of the enemy army and remained there. He built strength through the early years of Solomon, and Solomon ignored him rather than dealing with the threat while it was small. From the writer's observations he harried Israel all the days of Solomon and he was not eliminated. Solomon was not short of an army, nor of a great army commander in Benaiah. A full campaign against Syria would have been called for, or at least ought to have been prayed over and the Lord's guidance sought, but Solomon ignored the threat and let his army fight with the enemy only when they entered the land. He was political and defensive, rather than spiritually seeking advice and being "active".

The third enemy was from within Solomon's own court, and he also would be encouraged by Egypt. This man was Jeroboam, and initially he served Solomon as the ruler-tax collector-governor over the northern tribes on Solomon's behalf. He was a tough soldier in the small wars that the army fought, and a good administrator while Solomon built the fortress of Millo. This man had apparently worked upon the Millo fortress and the walls of Jerusalem, and so he knew their weaknesses, and he would later rebel and give this vital military information to the pharaoh of Egypt.

Verses 29 – 33. It is now that we discover that Solomon had a prophet in the land who he could have called upon to give him additional guidance, and from whom he could have taken direction from the Lord. Ahijah is the prophet of the Lord in that day and he takes action to deliver to Jeroboam the message of the Lord regarding the judgement upon Solomon, and to tell him that he will be the ruler of the northern kingdom. They are alone in a field and Jeroboam is wearing an expensive new outer garment. Such garments were incredibly expensive and it appears this one is a kingly garment of great wealth, and possibly one given to him by Solomon to mark his role as a governor.

The prophet takes this garment that speaks of rulership over all Israel and tears it into twelve pieces and hands ten back to Jeroboam. The prophet makes it clear that God Himself has given him the kingdom from the son of Solomon and that Solomon has lost the kingdom due to his sin and evil. This man is bluntly told that he is given the kingdom by God and if he remains obedient to the Lord he will be blessed there as its king. He is told that it is the worship of the pagan gods that has led to Solomon's demise and his being lifted up. The message below is clear – if he will serve the Lord he will be blessed as Solomon could have been blessed!

Verses 34 – 39. Jeroboam is told that Solomon will not be dispossessed of his kingdom during his own life time, so he knows from this point onwards that rebellion against Solomon is pointless for the Lord will be against him. He faces the same challenge that David did when he was anointed king by Samuel. He was the Lord's anointed replacement for Saul but he had to wait for the Lord to eliminate Saul; he had to keep back his hand from active rebellion if he wanted to secure God's blessing upon his kingdom later. Jeroboam won't be able to do this; for his greed for power will control him, just as Solomon's greed for women controlled him.

Jeroboam is told that the son of Solomon will have two tribes and he will have ten and that he is not to interfere in the south, for the Lord has appointed Judah and Benjamin to the sons of Solomon and no blessing will flow if he tries to seize them, for the north alone is his. This man will be able to rule, "according to all his soul desires", but he must obey the Lord to receive the full blessing that is available to him. All he has to do is follow the example of David, not the example of Solomon and he will be established as a king with the same promises as David had, and if he is spiritually superior to Solomon's son then he will even rule over him. Spirituality alone will open the door to lasting power and blessing for Israel, but this will be a rare occurrence in Israelite history.

Verses 40 – 43. The story of this incident gets out some-how. It won't be from Ahijah, so I can only suspect that Jeroboam himself got fat-headed about the prophetic word and blabbed it abroad. Solomon hears of it and takes action by seeking to execute Jeroboam, but he doesn't do it cleverly enough and Jeroboam escapes to Egypt. Once again we see Egypt at the centre of intrigue regarding the fall of Solomon's kingdom. The new pharaoh is called Shishak and he is no friend to Solomon. Jeroboam stays in Egypt until the death of Solomon and that may be as many as ten years from the date of his fleeing.

The writer now notes that the many deeds of Solomon are written in another book, but unfortunately it didn't survive for us to read it and fill in the gaps, but it isn't needed, as Solomon's "great works" were all distractions from the real issues that would lose his son the kingdom. He ends his account of this fallen and fatally flawed man with the announcement of his death and the reigning of his son. Solomon dies after forty years around age sixty. He dies judged of the Lord. He has sown the seeds of the nation's destruction and his son will do everything that stupidity orders to ensure that seed grows!

PASTORAL AND PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

1. It is not by man's might, nor by man's power, but by the Holy Spirit of God that we get the important victories in this life. Zechariah 4:6. Our challenge, like all the great and small men of the past, is to walk humbly before the Lord and fight the battles He directs us to in His strength only, in accordance with His plan only. Let us walk close to the Lord, for all other paths are disastrous.

2. Immorality is always the path to death and disaster. The great physical pleasure of wrongful sexual enjoyment masks its destructive power. Immorality is always destructive and its after taste bitter. Temporary lust based pleasures of any sort are no substitute for the relaxed joy of walking with the Lord into sustainable pleasure in the plan of God for us. God's right partner for us will always deliver more joy into our soul and body than the play things of this world. Satan

always has beautiful and apparently "wonderful" alternatives to the plan of God but they are always the path to destruction and death. Hollywood lives are not to be believer's lives! We are to copy the behaviours of godly people, and we are to reject the example of the immoral. Remember Paul's words to Timothy, "Flee Immorality!" 1 Timothy 6:11, 2 Timothy 2:22.

3. God's path requires obedience to God's Word. There is a simple principle that we have seen work out in the lives of each of the three great kings of Israel. Obedience to the Lord's will delivers blessing, and disobedience delivers judgement. Let's get this message firmly in our hearts and minds and be obedient to the Lord in all we do and say. Let's not be baffled by the judgements that come upon the disobedient, but be blessed in our obedience.

EVIL

1. **DEFINITION:** Evil is Satan's policy in opposition to God's doctrine. Evil is therefore a collection of beliefs and practises that back up Satan's viewpoint rather than God's.

2. Evil is not necessarily bad, it is simply a policy that will take you away from the path that God prepared for you.

3. False religion may be very moral and even ascetic (and therefore look "holy"), but if it is leading people away from God's revealed will it is evil.

4. Often evil can masquerade as "good". People who believe that their "good works" can satisfy God's holy demands are deceived by evil doctrine. Romans 7:19,20

5. Only God's Word, Bible Doctrine can help the believer distinguish between true good and evil, Hebrews 3:13,14.

6. Only a soul saturated in God's Word is truly protected from the subtlety of Satan's policy of evil. Proverbs 2:10-14, 3:7, 19:23.

7. Only applied knowledge of God's Word negates and neutralises evil. Psalms 54:5, Romans 12:21, Isaiah 45.

8. The issue for the believer is the daily choice to accept God's Word and therefore protect oneself against evil. God watches for our choices. Proverbs 11:18,19, 22:3, 24:1-4, Ephesians 5:16, 2 Thessalonians 3:2,3.

9. The company of evil people will distort the thinking of the believer and confuse his/her witness. Isaiah 5:20, 1 Corinthians 15:23.

10. There is no evil in God at all. Psalm 5:4, 1 John 1:5, 4:4.

11. God judges evil and will condemn it to the lake of fire for ever at the final judgement. Psalm 34:16, Isaiah 13:11, Revelation 20:11ff

12. In spite of evil still existing in the world due to Satan's on-going presence throughout the Church Age, the Lord is still on the throne, and his hand is on all things.

13. Satan only does things by "permission" and we are in the Lord's hands and so are, in Christ, safe. Job 1:6-12, Proverbs 16:3, 4, Isaiah 45:6, 7

Notes