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1 Kings 9 - 10



1 Kings - Steve Gregg

In "1 Kings 9-10," Steve Gregg discusses the completion of Solomon's building projects, including the temple and his own home. God showed His approval of these projects through the appearance of the glory cloud in the temple. Gregg explains that promises in the Old Testament were both conditional and typological, with fulfillment and continuation seen in the spiritual mode of the New Covenant. The discussion also touches on the controversy surrounding Hiram's displeasure with the cities given to him by Solomon and the use of forced labor during Solomon's reign.

Transcript

The story of Solomon picks up again now in 1 Kings 9. And what we have seen completed in the chapters that are just behind us is the building not only of the temple, which took seven years, but also of Solomon's own home that took 13 years, and other building projects that he did. And at the dedication of the temple, he offered thousands, tens of thousands of animals, and had a big feast, of course. He exhorted the people to be faithful so that God could keep his promises to the nation, and he prayed a long prayer of dedication for the temple, in which he identified the temple as the focus of God's presence in Israel.

And as the object toward which, or the direction toward which, Israel should pray. That they should pray in the temple, or toward the temple, seems to be what he assumed in his prayer. So that he gave many scenarios, if the people should sin and come under a famine, or if the people should sin and be defeated by their enemies, or if they should sin and be carried away into captivity in a far country, or anything like that.

He gives lots of different examples. The end is always the same. If they turn to you, and if they pray toward this temple, then hear from heaven and deliver them.

So Solomon has basically established the temple as the place toward which, or in which, prayers should be offered to God. And God showed his approval to this, in that his glory as a cloud appeared in the temple, just as it had in the tabernacle of Moses in Exodus chapter 40. So also the shekinah glory, as they call it, the cloud, the presence of God,

filled the temple, which was very clear endorsement on God's part of the temple as the place of his habitation on earth.

And the presence of God was so thick, I guess we could say, that the priests could not really go in there. They couldn't stand to minister there. The same was true when the cloud filled the tabernacle.

So this is kind of a repeat of that. And another thing that was a repeat of that is that when the tabernacle was first opened and dedicated, fire from the presence of the Lord came and ignited the altar. Here also, when Solomon placed certain sacrifices initially on the altar, fire came from the presence of God and consumed them.

So we have the visual supernatural evidences given that God is in this, that God is favorable toward the temple, and that he's now accepted this as his dwelling place on earth. As we said earlier, that God does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor did he even then.

This was just an accommodation he was making so that people who have time, space, relational orientation would have some concept of God can be found here. But of course, it was never to be thought that God could not be found elsewhere, or that God can't see you or hear your prayers elsewhere. In fact, Daniel, far away in Babylon, prayed toward the temple.

Even as Solomon in his prayer suggested, if our people are taken away into captivity and they pray toward the temple, then here it's obvious that if God could hear them in Babylon, then he was not confined to the temple. Their prayer to the temple was their way of acknowledging that it was him and not some other God that they were addressing their prayers to, because the temple was a symbol of his presence. But God actually does have a temple on earth today, which is his actual home, and that is the body of Christ.

Christ spoke of his own body when he was on earth as a temple. He said, destroy this temple, and in three days I'll raise it up. And he spoke about the temple of his body, not about the Jewish temple that was right there next to him when he was speaking.

And, of course, we read that the body of Christ is now no longer simply the one man, but many people, many members. Christ is the head, and the rest of the body is us, and the body of Christ is still the temple of God. The body of Christ is still the habitation of God.

We are seen, alternatively, as members of a body or as stones, living stones, built into a habitation of God through the spirit, so that the temple today is us. Not so much us individually, although each of us does possess the spirit, but collectively. Each stone is alive and worships God, but collectively, the body of Christ is God's habitation on earth.

Ultimately, he will assemble us all into one place. We now meet in small assemblies here

and there, but someday the entire body of Christ will be together with him, united with him, and assembled in one place, and that will be a completed temple. Right now, the temple is under construction.

So, we saw that in reading of Solomon's building of the temple, there were things that could be seen as parallel. Principally, that the stones were carved at the quarry and then taken to the temple site. They were not taken to the temple site and then prepared.

And we are prepared by God here, at the quarry, where he finds us, in our earthly life. That is the venue of our sanctification, of our being prepared. And later, once the stones are prepared, they are then removed to the temple site, as will be the case at a later time for us.

Chapter 9 says, And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he wanted to do, that the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time. Now, the first time was when he was at Gibeon, and that's when God had said, Ask anything you want, and he had asked for wisdom, and the request pleased God, so he granted it and gave him additional things that he might have more selfishly asked for, but did not. And the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared to him in Gibeon.

And the Lord said to him, I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before me. Apparently, the prayer concerning the temple. I have sanctified this house which you have built to put my name there forever, and my eyes and my heart will be there perpetually.

Now, here is a good example of how the Bible uses the word forever and perpetual and so forth. God says he will dwell and have his favor toward this temple that Solomon built forever. What's not there now, it's been gone a long time.

In fact, the temple Solomon built has been gone for over 2,500 years. Because it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC, it is not there. And even though the temple was rebuilt later on, it was destroyed too, and it's not there anymore either.

And it's been gone for 2,000 years. How is it that God could say he would dwell there and have his favor there forever? Well, there's two ways in which this is true. You find the same kind of language spoken about many things in the Old Testament.

For example, the keeping of Passover, or practice of circumcision, or the title to the land of Canaan being given to Israel, or the Levitical priesthood walking before God forever. None of these things are true today, necessarily. Israel does not control all the land that was once given to them.

The Sabbath is no longer an observation that Christians are required to observe, as near as we can tell from the New Testament, and yet it was forever too. Circumcision clearly

is said not to be a requirement in the New Covenant, and yet that was forever. The Levitical priesthood is gone, and that was supposed to be forever.

The temple of Solomon is gone, it was supposed to be forever. Why do all these things that are supposed to be forever come to an end? And there's two ways that that can be answered. One, of course, is that the promises are conditional.

Now, those are the promises. Some of them are commands. Some of what we just described are commands, and some are promises.

The ones that are promises are conditional. And so, we even have that stated in 1 Samuel 2.30, where God said to Eli, I said that your house and the house of your father should walk before me forever. But he says, now far be it from me, says the Lord, for he that honors me I will honor, and he that despises me shall be lightly esteemed.

So God says, I did say this would happen forever, but I'm just going to clarify this or modify this. It's conditional. Everything's conditional.

Therefore, the possession of the land of Canaan, the priesthood of Levi, or God's blessing on the temple, all of these things that he said were forever, they're all conditional. But there's another aspect of it, and this applies both to the commands and to the promises. And that is that they were typological.

They were typical. They were types of something that is permanent. The temple of Solomon is not there, and God will never live in it again.

But he lives in a temple of which Solomon's temple was a type. Circumcision is not required anymore, but there is something of which it was a type. Circumcision of the heart, which is required still.

The land of Canaan is not necessarily in the possession of Israel anymore. But the promised land of which it was a type is experienced by people of faith. The Levitical priesthood does not exist anymore, but it was a type in the shadow of Christ's high priesthood and of the priesthood of the believers, which is still in existence and will be forever.

In other words, many things in the Old Testament are said to be forever, but it is not in the same form or in the same mode that they endure forever. They endure for a while in their original mode, but then they were intended to come to their fulfillment in the New Covenant. And with the coming of the New Covenant came the fulfillment and the continuation of them, but in a different mode, in a spiritual rather than ritual mode.

The ritual anticipates the spiritual. The ritual is symbolic and temporary. The spiritual is reality and permanent.

So, that's why we find this kind of language here. There is a sense in which it is forever, but not in its present form. Not in the form that it was happening then.

Because God had in mind all the time something else, something spiritual. And that spiritual thing is that which will continue forever. I liken it to a child growing up.

We might say that this child is going to live 80 years. Well, he might live for 80 years, but he won't be a child for 80 years. After a few years, he is going to become an adult.

And then the same person, in fact, will live on, but he will be in a different mode. Not a child mode, but an adult mode. He gives up his childhood in order to become something else, a man.

And yet, it's the same person. He does live that long, but not as a child. He matures.

The existence of a child anticipates an adult. The adult condition is the fulfillment of that which was anticipated in the child's condition. And so, Paul refers to the Law, the period of the Old Testament, as a time of childhood.

In Galatians chapter 4. And that the coming of Christ is the coming of maturity. If you're not familiar with that, I'll turn there and show you what I'm referring to here. In Galatians chapter 4, beginning at verse 1. Galatians 4.1. Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave.

Though he is the master of all, he is put under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. That is, while he is a child, he doesn't have responsibilities given to him. Although he is the heir and will someday rule everything.

It says, he has to be kept under guardians while he is a child. He has to be trained and kept under control. Even so we, when we were children, were under bondage to the elements of the world.

In this context, he means the Law. But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. That is of maturity.

As mature sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts. Now, what he is saying is, that a child goes through two stages.

He may be the heir of a great estate, but when he is a child, he is kept under rulers and guardians. He isn't given freedom. He is not any better than a servant or a slave in the household, in terms of his privileges that he realizes at that time.

But his role is to grow out of that and to have a mature life and an inheritance. He says that's how it was for us when we were kept under the Law. That's when we were children.

The human race, in other words. Or more probably, the Jewish people were the ones who were under the Law. But before we were Christians, before Christianity came, it was like the childhood where we were kept under a law, under a governor, under a guardian, the Law.

But then when Jesus came, that was the fullness of time. Just as there comes a time in a child's life when the father decides, this is the time I'm going to turn over the estate to my son. This is the time I'm going to treat him as a man now, and not as a child.

Just as the father, he says, has that time appointed in verse 2, so God had a time appointed when he would send Jesus to do the same thing for us. So that we pass from legalism of the old covenant into maturity. We're not under the guardian of the Law anymore.

We're supposed to have internal controls. When the Spirit of God is given to us, he guides us internally, rather than laws externally. That's what Paul talks about.

Paul himself suggests that the Law and its forms are related to immaturity, toward childhood. But the new covenant is maturity. So, in a sense, the child does continue the whole length of the lifetime, but he doesn't continue as a child.

So the temple, and the priesthood, and the Sabbath, and the land, and the circumcision, and all those institutions, they're said to be forever. They are, but not in the childhood mode. They come to the mature mode, and continue forever that way.

And so, in that sense, we see that these statements that are about things that are perpetual and forever, well, they really are. Now, verse 4. Now if you walk before me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep my statutes and my judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel. Once again, this forever establishment of the throne of Solomon.

Now, there's no one sitting on the throne of Solomon today, not on earth. There's no earthly king in Jerusalem. There has not been an earthly king in Jerusalem.

Not a Jewish one. Not since Jeconiah. 586 BC.

There's not been a king there. Not a Jewish one. Not one descended from Solomon.

Not on the earth. However, there is a descendant of Solomon who is on the throne in heaven, and he's there forever. He's in throne forever.

There is the throne of Solomon established forever, but it's not the earthly one. Not the temporal one. It's moved into the eternal throne, the eternal kingdom of David.

And of David's successor, Jesus. And that is forever, for sure. Verse 6. But if you or your sons at all turn from following me, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them, and this house which I have sanctified for my name I will cast out of my sight.

Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples, and this house will be exalted, yet everyone who passes by it will be astonished, and will hiss, and will say, Why has the Lord done this to this land and this house? Then they will answer, Because they forsook Yahweh their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshipped them and served them. Therefore, Yahweh has brought all this calamity on them. So notice he says, I'll dwell in and have favor toward this temple forever.

And he also had said similar things about the land of Israel. But he says, But if you disobey, then you'll be thrown out of the land, and the temple will be discarded. And everyone will say, Well, I thought this was supposed to last.

What happened to these people? Why did they get thrown out of the land? Why is their temple abandoned? Well, the answer will be because they forsook God. And therefore, his promises are conditional. Verse 10.

Now it happened at the end of 20 years when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king's house. Hiram, the king of Tyre, had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress and gold as much as he desired. But King Solomon then gave Hiram 20 cities in the land of Galilee.

This is rather sad and funny. Then Hiram went from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, but they didn't please him. They weren't very good cities.

So he said, What kind of cities are these which you've given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Kabal as they are to this day. Kabal means good for nothing. So Hiram had been very generous towards Solomon, giving him all the cedars and all the workmen and all the gold that he wanted and stuff.

And of course, Solomon had repaid in food. It's not as if these cities were the only thing that Hiram got back for all that he'd given. But this was apparently some kind of a bonus.

The agreement had been made that these supplies would be given in exchange for food supplies, which Solomon no doubt did send year by year as he promised. So there was a payment made that had agreed upon, but it's sort of like giving a tip to somebody who did a job well or giving a bonus to somebody that has pleased you as a bonus apparently. Solomon gave the King of Tyre these 20 cities, but they weren't very good cities apparently.

Hiram called them good for nothing. So there might've been a slight offense taken there. It didn't result in anything like war or anything, but to this day, the author says they're called the cities of good for nothing.

Then Hiram sent the King 120 talents of gold. Why? We don't know. Apparently this is like both of them kind of just on top of what they'd already promised, they're both sending bonuses to each other for, you know, for working together so well and being such good partners.

And this is the reason for the labor force which King Solomon raised to build the house of the Lord. This, his own house, the millow, the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. Pharaoh, King of Egypt, had gone up and taken Gezer and burned it with fire, had killed the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and had given it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.

So of course, Solomon built it, that is he embellished it, improved its structures. Solomon built Gezer, lower Beth-Horon, Baalath, and Tadmor, in the wilderness in the land of Judah. All the storage cities that Solomon had, cities for his chariots and cities for his cavalry, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

He apparently had no limits to his budget. David had become very wealthy and left a lot of money behind for Solomon. And then Solomon's continuous receiving of tribute from those subject nations that David had conquered meant a lot of continuous income.

And so he was not limited in what he could do. He could just build the infrastructure as much as he wished and make Israel into the dream nation that everyone in the world would marvel at and see, you know, it's full of beautiful buildings, it's peaceful. Solomon really did beautify the place.

All the people who were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not of the children of Israel, that is, their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the children of Israel had not been able to destroy completely, from these Solomon raised forced labor, as it is to this day. Now that's interesting that it says, as it is to this day, because the author is writing hundreds of years later. He's writing about 400 years after Solomon's time.

So apparently those Canaanites who had been strong enough to resist conquest during the time of Joshua were no longer strong enough to resist Israel in Solomon's day. First of all, in Joshua's day, there were probably only about 3 million Israelites. In Solomon's day, it is thought there were about 5 million.

So Israel was much more powerful. Furthermore, Israel had become more established and, you know, other enemies of Israel had been conquered all around. And these

Canaanites simply had less hope of standing against them continually.

But by the time of Solomon, you know, enough bloodshed had been shed in the days of David. Solomon had no heart probably to just go out and kill the Canaanites. So he thought, well, there's a lot of them there.

We can use them for forced labor. And apparently the Canaanites who were not killed became permanently forced laborers up until right at the end of the kingdom when these books were written. Kings were written right at the time of Jeremiah, right about the time that Jerusalem fell.

But the children of Israel, Solomon made no forced laborers because they were men of war and his servants, his officers, his captains, commanders of chariots and his cavalry. Others were chiefs of the officials who were over Solomon's work. 550 who ruled over the people who did the work.

But Pharaoh's daughter came up from the city of David to her house, which Solomon had built for her. Then he built the millow. Now the millow is often mentioned in scripture.

I'm not really positive what the millow was used for, but it was a district. It was a district of Jerusalem that often is mentioned as a location. Now three times a year, Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he had built for the Lord.

And he burned incense with them on the altar that was before the Lord. So he finished the temple. Now it says he offered sacrifices and he burned incense.

I don't know if this means that he did so with his own hands. If so, then God was certainly allowing some variation on the law. King Saul was rejected by God because he was so presumptuous as to offer an animal sacrifice to the Lord when Samuel, the priest, was supposed to do it.

And according to the law, it was supposed to be the priests, the sons of Aaron, that would offer the sacrifices and burn the incense. So that Saul had done this as king and been forsaken by God, rejected by God, would suggest that David or Solomon or any other king wouldn't have those privileges either, at least not by virtue of his rank as king, unless God just became more slack about that with them. He may have done so with David because David was a man after his own heart and living at a time when there wasn't a temple and a lot of the procedures laid out in Exodus were simply not being followed.

And God just kind of turned a blind eye and allowed David to offer sacrifices as he did. And maybe he just decided to continue the lenient policy with Solomon. But it's also possible when it says Solomon offered, he may have provided the offerings out of his own treasury, but had the priests do the offering because often it would say that somebody did something when in fact they did it through the hands of agents.

And that could be the case here. Verse 26, King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezean-Geber, which is near Eleth on the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom. Then Hiram sent his servants with the fleet, seamen who knew the sea.

You see, the people of Tyre, Tyre was a merchant city on the coast. And so the people of Tyre were skilled, experienced sailors. They were mariners.

Israel really didn't ever have mariners. Israel did not set out to sea much. They stayed at home as much as they could.

And even once they were scattered throughout the Gentile lands, they really didn't get into sailing much. Occasionally they'd travel on commercial ships to get someplace, as Paul did, to get to Rome. But the Israelites kind of were afraid of the sea.

To them, the sea represented the place where the monsters were. Leviathan was there. The sea is that to which the Gentiles were compared to, the foaming, unpredictable, unstable sea.

Israel was the land. The Gentiles were the sea. And the sea was simply something that the Jews had very little taste for and therefore never developed a navy, never developed a lot of, you know, mariner skills.

But the people of Tyre did. And so when Solomon decided to expand his projects into probably a merchant marine, where he'd go out and gather things from Africa and other places, which we read that he did, he needed help from people who knew more than he did and more than his people did about the sea. And so Hiram sent servants with the fleet, seamen who knew the sea, to work with the servants of Solomon.

And they went to Ophir and acquired 420 talents of gold from there. How they got it, we don't know. It's not likely they took it by force, like, say, Columbus did.

But they may have done some trading there and acquired a lot more gold. And they brought it to King Solomon. Now, actually, Solomon, he did gather a lot of things from other countries and from Africa.

Elsewhere, there are lists of some of the products that were brought to him and were existing in Israel in his time, including apes and things like that, which were not from Israel, but from Africa. But, nonetheless, being a merchant marine enterprise was not something that continued to be very successful in Israel in later times. Israel never really became a maritime people.

In chapter 10, Now when the queen of Sheba heard the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. Now, Sheba is not known, we don't know the place called Sheba, but there is a place called Seba, which many scholars think is the same place mentioned here. That would have been in the southern

region of Arabia, of the Arabian Peninsula.

And so she was probably an Arabian woman and queen of an Arabian people. And she had heard, as everyone else had, how wise Solomon was. And since her kingdom was, although some distance away, still in the region, and apparently had not been conquered by David or by Solomon, they were an independent nation, but were interested in what was going on in Israel, which was getting so much international attention.

She decided to come and see this great king that had been reputed to have so much wisdom. And so she came to test him with hard questions. Kings and queens had a lot of wise people on their council, and they were philosophers.

They were philosophers who were trying to give answers to hard questions about life. You know, why is there suffering? What happens when people die? Who knows what the issues were? The issues that have always plagued the minds of people. And they had wise counselors that they would consult.

In all likelihood, there were questions that had never really been able to be answered well by her own counselors. There are questions that are hard or impossible for people to answer. And so she apparently had a list of hard questions, questions that had never been satisfactorily answered to her.

And she'd heard about Solomon, and she thought she'd put him to the test, see if he can do better than the others. She came to prove him or test him with hard questions. She came to Jerusalem with a great retinue, with camels that bore spices, much gold, and precious stones.

So Solomon gets richer all the time with these honorary gifts that people bring to him. And when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. That is, all the hard questions she needed answers to.

So Solomon answered all her questions. There was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her. He had spent a lot of time studying nature.

We read that he had not only written or spoken 3,000 proverbs, he also studied nature, studied plants, animals, big animals, little animals, insects, all kinds of things. He's a naturalist. He had a voracious mind, and he gathered information wherever he could get it.

He also had the capacity to synthesize information as the writing of proverbs requires. He had wisdom and knowledge, and he simply had figured it all out. So he was able to answer all of her questions.

There wasn't anything that he couldn't explain. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, and also the house that he'd built, and the food on his table,

and the seating of his servants, and the service of his waiters, and their apparel, his cupbearers, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the Lord, there was no more breath in her. It took her breath away.

No more spirit in her. Now, spirit and breath are the same word in Hebrew. And so it may mean that just kind of she gasped.

It took her breath away. She was speechless. Or it could mean her spirit, she had no more spirit in her.

That is, she had come there maybe with sort of a skepticism and an attempt to kind of prove him not to be all that he reputed to be. She brought her hard questions to see if she could, you know, nail him and stomp him and so forth. And it's possible, although it's not necessary, but it's possible to assume that she had come with more of an adversarial kind of attitude, kind of feisty, and that, you know, she changed her attitude.

Her spirit changed. There was no more spirit in her, like a spirited horse that needs to be broken and tamed, that she, her animosity or hostility or whatever may have been suggested, that it was removed, like a broken horse. Now, it's not necessary to see it that way because spirit can mean breath.

If it just means it took her breath away, then there's no reason, there's really no reason to believe that she had any adversarial attitude toward him. But she might have, and we just don't know. The point is, it had a tremendous impact on her and made her an admirer of Solomon.

Then she said to the king, it was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However, I did not believe the words until I came and saw it with my own eyes. And indeed, the half was not told me.

Your wisdom and the prosperity exceed the fame of which I'd heard. Happy are your men and happy are those, these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom. Blessed be the Lord, your God, who delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel because the Lord has loved Israel forever.

Therefore, he made you king to do justice and righteousness. Now, this may have been her parting announcement as she left. She just wanted to say, well, I'm extremely impressed.

It's much better than I expected. But she said it with real admiration, obviously. She says, I'd heard great reports about you, but it's much more than I had heard.

The half was not told to me. And there's another sense in which, no doubt, the half was not told to her. And that's the half you read about in Ecclesiastes.

Solomon's glory. What she saw was Solomon's glory. Jesus used that expression.

Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Well, the glory of Solomon, she saw, was the food on his table and the house he'd built and the seating of his servants and their apparel and their cupbearers and the entryway and all the fancy stuff, all the wealth and all the just amazing things that were far more impressive than she would have thought. That was half.

The other half wasn't told to her. And that was the half that Solomon writes about when he says, it's all vanity. He says, I sought to find the chief good of man in the things under the sun.

I sought it through money. I sought it through women. I sought it through music.

I sought it through horticulture. I sought it through almost everything that people can seek it through. And he says, each time I sought meaning and the chief good, everything I sought it in was empty.

It was all emptiness. It was like striving after the wind. That's something that not everyone could observe.

Seeing Solomon in all his glory, they might not know that it was Solomon in all his frustration, all his emptiness, because he did eventually depart from the Lord. We have not read of it yet, but we do in the next chapter. And therefore, Solomon's kingdom had two sides.

Queen of Sheba could see part of that. The other half was not told her. But it is told us, because we have the book of Ecclesiastes to tell us that being wealthy, being powerful, being admired, being famous, it's not satisfying without something more.

There's something else that the human soul needs, and those things don't fill it. And therefore, if that's all that a man has, it's not enough, and never will be enough. Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold, spices in great abundance, and precious stones.

There never again came such abundance of spices as the Queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. So, he had received lots of other kinds of things, probably in larger numbers or abundance than what she brought. But spices, apparently Arabian spices, her kingdom specialized in trading in spices, and so she brought more spices than anyone else could ever bring to King Solomon.

Now, the Jews and the Ethiopians have a number of legends about the Queen of Sheba. The Ethiopians have a legend that one of their ancient kings was the offspring of a relationship between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. That does not seem to be able to be confirmed from history.

In fact, historical records seem to give a different ancestry for their kings. But, for some reason, the Ethiopians have had this long tradition about that. That Solomon and the Queen of Sheba had a sexual relationship, had a child, and that child gave rise to the dynasties that have ruled in ancient times in Ethiopia.

Now, the Jews themselves have traditions about this in the Talmud. And they also agree that Solomon and the Queen of Sheba had a relationship. There's no particular reason to believe this because the Talmud represents traditions that arose hundreds of years after Solomon and did not probably exist beforehand and therefore may have arisen from the sexually vivid imaginations of the rabbis.

But their stories go that the Queen of Sheba stayed for a while in Jerusalem before returning back and that she was resistant to Solomon's overtures, but that he had made an agreement with her that she would not drink any water for overnight or something like that. I don't remember. I've heard it.

I don't remember the details. And in her quarters, he had her food brought that was very salty. And so she snuck some water and then had to submit to him.

And they had sex and she had a baby. Now, if she was not a married woman, that would not be a particularly immoral thing since Solomon married queens or princesses from many lands. I mean, she certainly would not be the only one.

Though she didn't stay with him, so they didn't marry. So that would have made it not moral. But for him to have taken her as a wife, if she didn't have another husband, would have not been an immoral thing.

But obviously the Bible does not represent it as a case of her marrying him or having children with him or even staying with him. Now, Jesus made reference to the Queen of Sheba and compared her favorably against the people of Israel of his own time. In speaking about many of the cities that did not receive him as they should, he said that the Queen of Sheba would rise up in judgment against them above Capernaum.

We see this in Matthew 12, 42. Jesus said, The Queen of the South, he means the Queen of Sheba, will rise up in judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon. And indeed, a greater than Solomon is here.

So he says, the Queen of Sheba came from the ends of the earth or the ends of the land, obviously the landmass down in the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula was the end of the landmass that we'd call the Middle East. And she came from some distance, in other words, to hear Solomon because she was interested in knowing the truth. And yet the people of Jesus' generation apparently are not interested in knowing the truth because one greater than Solomon is at their doorstep.

They don't have to cross a lot of desert to find him. He's right there. And they won't listen to him.

So he's saying, you've got one greater than Solomon here and you won't listen. She didn't have anything but Solomon to go to and she had to travel some distance to get there and she did it anyway because she was interested in knowing the truth. So Jesus had at least a positive thing to say about her.

And back in 1 Kings 10, 11, also the ships of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought great quantities of almagwud and precious stones from Ophir. And the king made steps of almagwud. I was always wanting to have steps made of almagwud, but I could never figure out what almagwud was, but it must have been fancy because the king made his steps out of it for the house of the Lord and for the king's house.

Also harps and stringed instruments for singers. There never again came such almagwud, nor has the like been seen to this day. And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all that she desired, whatever she asked, besides Solomon had given her according to the royal bounty.

So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants. So she brought great gifts to him, especially a large quantity of spices, but also gold and other stuff is mentioned. But then he gave her a bunch of stuff back.

I don't know if it ended up being kind of like a wash, like what she gave was equal to what he gave or not, but it's just all very, it's just a matter of showing respect to one's fellow monarchs. The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was 666 talents of gold. Now, obviously the number 666 in Revelation, everybody's looking for clues about the 666.

I'm not, but lots of people are. It seems like all my life I've known people trying to float theories and speculate, oh, what is this mysterious number? And there have actually been some people who've tried to turn back here. This is the only case elsewhere than in Revelation 13 that the number 666 is found.

And so they say, oh, look, it's a reference back to this. What's it had to do with? Well, it's the amount of gold that Solomon received. So maybe it has something to do with banking or the banking industry or something.

People will do very far stretches of their imagination to try to make connections that don't exist. There's no reason at all to suggest the 666 here is anything other than a statistical weight of gold, a lot of gold. Besides that, from the traveling merchants, from the income of the traders, from all the kings of Arabia and from the governors of the country.

And King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold. 600 shekels of gold went

into each shield. Most of these fancy things that Solomon made were later traded off to the Assyrians to try to get them to go away.

When the Assyrians were coming into the region and threatening Jerusalem, at various times kings like Ahaz would take gold shields and such and give them away to the Assyrians to buy them off and make them go home. And so a lot of this fancy stuff, these 200 gold shields and such, which must have been worth a fortune, they were lost because of later kings being foolish and not serving God. It says he also made 300 shields of hammered gold.

Three minas, I thought it was 200, sorry, 300, of gold went into each shield and the king put them in the house of the force of Lebanon. Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory. Now ivory is expensive stuff.

I mean, it doesn't grow on trees, you don't mine it. You have to get it off of elephants. And an elephant tusk can be a large thing and provide a lot of ivory, but how one forms a whole bunch of elephant tusks into a throne, I'm not sure.

I imagine it can be melted down, I don't really know. Reshaped, carved, I'm not really sure how you take an elephant tusk and turn it into a substance that you can make a throne from. Now piano keys, I can see, because piano keys are little things.

So ivory piano keys, you can make a lot of those from a tusk, but it seems like if you're making a king's throne, you've got to have a lot of tusks and they somehow have to be put together in a way that makes sense. And they're strange shaped. I really don't know if it's possible to carve tusks into like boards of ivory or what.

But he did it. Might be hard, but he did it. He could do whatever he wanted.

That was the thing about Solomon. He could do anything he wanted and that's why when you read Ecclesiastes, you find out how unsatisfied he was, how instructive it is, because most of us can't do anything we want. We just imagine that if we could do more of that or get more of that, or if we could pursue something that we dream would be happiness engendering, that it would be fulfilling to us.

But we can't do that. We don't have all the money in the world. We don't have all the opportunities in the world.

Solomon had all the opportunities essentially in the world. There's nothing he couldn't do that he wanted to do. And the fact that he did everything he wanted to do and still didn't find happiness or fulfillment in it is a pretty good lesson.

In fact, that may be why God allowed Solomon to have so many opportunities so that he could write Ecclesiastes. He could explain to those. No one can say, well, if he just had a little more of that, it would have helped.

Well, he had a little more of everything, a lot more of everything. And so he had a throne made out of ivory, overlaid it with pure gold. Ivory is beautiful stuff, and yet he overlays it so he can't even see the ivory.

The ivory is just there to know it's there. Why not build a throne out of wood and overlay it with gold if you're not going to see it anyway? But instead he goes to all the trouble of killing all those elephants and somehow having his workmen transform tusks into furniture, and then he covers it all with gold so he can't even see that it is ivory. Very opulent.

The throne had six steps. The top of the throne was round at the back. There were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests.

Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps. Nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom. I imagine that's possibly true.

That's quite a fantastic throne. You go up these six steps and on either side of each step there's a lion. I might just say this about Solomon's throne since I think I can spare the time.

It's really kind of important when it comes to dealing with one of the claims that's commonly made by dispensationalists, and that is the claim that Jesus has not yet received his place on the throne of David. You see, the understanding is, both with dispensationalists and everyone else who's a Christian, that the Messiah would sit on David's throne. That was promised to David.

It's promised back in 2 Samuel 7, and verses 12 through 15 or so, but especially in verse 12, 2 Samuel 7, 12, I will set up your seat after you who will come from your body. I will establish his kingdom. He'll build a house, etc.

It goes on to talk about how, I guess the word throne may not be used in this passage, but many times the Messiah would sit on David's throne is stated. It's stated in the Psalms. It's stated in some of the repeated, the repetitions of this promise that God made to David.

And so, some people say, this has yet to be fulfilled because Jesus, when he was on earth, never did sit on David's throne. And if he's going to sit on David's throne, that's got to be in Jerusalem because that's where David's throne was. And so, that's got to happen in the millennium.

That's going to happen when Jesus comes back because that's the only time that it could possibly be fulfilled. Now, the New Testament suggests that Jesus has already taken David's throne in heaven at the right hand of God. But a dispensationist would say, but David's throne isn't in heaven.

David's throne is on earth. And therefore, although Jesus is on the throne in heaven, it's not the same thing as David's throne because he has to be literally on the chair that David sat on. However, David's throne doesn't necessarily mean the same chair.

Solomon is said to have sat on David's throne, but Solomon made a different chair out of ivory and gold. David didn't sit on that chair. Sitting on the throne of Israel is David's throne, no matter what chair is there.

David's throne would be long dead by now, long gone. Not dead, but it would have been fallen apart. Any chair that David sat on 3,000 years ago would not be worth sitting on today.

It'd be rotten and it'd be broken. It wouldn't even exist. And it doesn't exist.

There's no way Jesus is going to sit on the actual chair that David sat on. Therefore, sitting on David's throne doesn't mean that. Solomon didn't sit on David's throne in that sense.

He sat on his own throne. But it was David's throne in that it was the throne of the same kingdom, the kingdom of God. Israel was the kingdom of God.

David ruled over the kingdom of God. So did Solomon. So did others.

So does Jesus. Jesus has taken his throne over the kingdom of God, and that is David's throne, just as we might say the present monarchs of England sit on the throne of whoever. An ancient king of England.

May not be the same chair. That might have been replaced. But they're sitting on the same throne governing the same people.

And so, as David was the king that God put over God's people, so Jesus is the king that God put over his people. And that is taking the throne, taking the position David once held. So, we can see that in Solomon's case, though it is always said that he sat on David's throne, the throne, the actual chair he sat on was a different chair.

He made his own. And therefore, sitting on David's throne doesn't necessarily mean anything about the actual chair, or even location of the chair. Because Solomon made a throne house for his throne.

David didn't have that. So, it was even a different location. Different chair, different location.

Same monarchy. Same actual position. Now, 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.

Not one was of silver. For this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. That is,

silver was essentially nothing.

There was so much gold, and gold is worth so much more than silver. That silver, which is usually accounted as, you know, a substance to make fancy cups and things from, they wouldn't have been considered to be fancy. Silver is nothing.

It says, For the king had merchant ships at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years, the merchant ships came bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys. So, King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

And all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. Each man brought his present, articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year. These would be, of course, the subject nations that David had conquered that were still bringing tribute to the throne.

These are what they would bring, silver and gold and garments and armor and so forth, and they'd do it annually. They'd pay their tribute on a yearly basis. And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen.

He had 1,400 chariots, 12,000 horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities with the king in Jerusalem. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones. That's why it wasn't worth much.

It was not rare. And he made cedars as abundant as sycamores. Now, sycamores are the native trees of Israel that grew in abundance.

Cedars were more rare because they needed some different conditions that were found up north in Lebanon. But he brought down so many cedars that they were as common in Israel as the sycamores had been. And Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Kava.

The king's merchants brought them in Kava, bought them in Kava at the current price. That is, he didn't get a special deal. He paid full price for them.

He had no trouble paying for them. Now, a chariot that was imported from Egypt cost 600 shekels of silver and a horse, 150. And thus, through the agents, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

Now, he started an import-export business of these chariots. He bought them at a certain price and apparently sold them at a profit. So he continued to increase the wealth.

He was a wise ruler and knew how to handle money and how to handle business. And he wrote about some of that in Proverbs. But what's interesting is that he had no problem selling chariots to pagans whom you might think might build up a military force with

them and attack him.

But he was secure. He had thousands of chariots of his own. He was very secure.

Now, we see in this and in the later reference to his wives, which we will find in the next chapter, that Solomon did not follow what the law of God commanded for a king of Israel. In Deuteronomy chapter 17, God had laid out the rules for kings in Israel when they would have kings. And it specifically says in verse 16, Deuteronomy 17, 16, He shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses.

We're specifically told that Solomon did import horses from Egypt. For the Lord has said, you shall not return that way. Verse 17 says, Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away.

Well, this Solomon did. He did multiply wives for himself, and his heart did turn away. So we see that although there's not a lot of instructions God gave for kings, it wouldn't be hard to memorize them all.

Solomon apparently forgot or disregarded them. And this was, of course, the beginning of his end. God gave him everything he wanted, but no doubt preferred for him to want the things that were agreeable with the will of God.

And wanting a lot of horses, a lot of wives would not be agreeable. So like Israel at an earlier time, God gave them their request, and with it, leanness of soul. So he also gave Solomon everything he wanted.

And with it, his soul became lean, and he actually ended up losing his faith, at least for a while. So we'll end there and pick it up again next time.