

1 Kings 9

Good evening and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn in your bibles to 1 Kings chapter 9?

Last week in chapter 8 we saw Solomon's prayer of dedication of the newly built temple.

For the next 370 years, the Temple of Solomon will serve as the centerpiece of Hebrew life. The Temple becomes the holiest spot on earth. These days we're reading of were the most glorious days of King Solomon's reign. In fact, these may've been the most glorious days in the history of Israel.

After Solomon's prayer something wonderful happens to show God's approval

2 Chronicles 7:1 When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.[fn] 2 And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house. 3 When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, saying:

"For He is good,
For His mercy endures forever." [fn]

4 Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD God personally lit the fire on the sacrificial altar!

What a glorious show of approval.

Tonight, we'll see God's instructions to Solomon, and we're gonna study chapters 9-10 and the title of tonight's message is The Peak of Solomon

LETS PRAY

Back in 1 Kings chapter 2, God paid a personal visit to Solomon in a dream – and granted Solomon wisdom. Now in chapter 9 God comes to Solomon again, and encourages Solomon to use his wisdom.

1 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, 2 that the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon.

Now most theologians believe that about 20 years has passed between God's first visit to Solomon and this one. And this is important to know because it reminds us that there can be long periods of time between us experiencing a fresh revelation from the Lord.

It can be frustrating to think that we need to have a revelation from God or a miraculous experience every day or even every week.

When we study the Book of Acts, it's easy to assume that the early church witnessed miracles daily if not hourly. But remember, the Book of Acts covers a time span of thirty-eight years.

God is in no rush. And since we have eternity to walk with Him, while on this earth He teaches us to walk by faith and not by sight.

His desire is for us to develop discipline, and to praise Him even when we might not feel His presence. We're to study His Word even though we might not experience a mind-blowing revelation each time. I love the quote that says 'obedience is a long walk in the same direction.'

3-5

3 And the LORD said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. 4 Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, 5 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.' The Hebrew word for integrity speaks of singleness. God promised to establish Solomon's kingdom as long as he lived his life with as much integrity as his father David had. But wait-we've studied David right-he was a sinful man!

David had flaws and failures. But one thing he had was integrity of heart. David never left the Lord to follow false gods. Yes David sinned and strayed from obeying God. But David's heart was always for the Lord, and it is the heart that matters **1 Samuel 16:7** **But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees;[fn] for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."**

That is why the Lord uses David as a standard by which all other kings in Israel would be measured.

Regardless of our failings and faults, God looks at our heart.

6-7 God gives the consequences of disobedience should Solomon leave his love for the Lord.

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, 7 then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. The positive promise of the first 5 verses was followed by a negative promise. If Solomon or his descendants turned from following the LORD, God promised that He would deal with a disobedient Israel.

8-9

8 And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' 9 Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them.' ” Back in the Exodus, God said in **Deuteronomy 28:1 Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His**

commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.

The newly completed temple was set on high, because of both its location and size. Here, however, God promises not only to have His presence leave the temple, but He would leave His own people should they forsake Him and follow other gods.

With such a glorious temple, Israel would be tempted to forsake God Himself in place of the temple and make an idol out of it. Here the Lord reminds Solomon that He would never bless idol worship.

We studied these promises at length when we went through Deuteronomy. Under the Old Covenant, God promised to use Israel to exalt Himself among the nations one way or another. If Israel obeyed, He would bless them so much that other nations would have to recognize the hand of God was blessing Israel.

But God also promised that if Israel disobeyed His commands, He would punish the nation so severely that the other nations around Israel would be astonished at the chastising hand of God among His disobedient people.

Now as we go through the rest of chapter 9 and 10, there are several areas that have been debated by scholars for years. I'll explain both sides, share my opinion, but I encourage you to pray as you read these and ask the Lord on the interpretation.

10-11

10 Now it happened at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD and the king's house 11 (Hiram the king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress and gold, as much as he desired), that King Solomon then gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. Now scholars are kinda divided on this, but I'll tell you my opinion. I personally believe this was not good for Solomon or Israel to do. Remember Hiram was an ally to both David and Solomon. He supplied all the trees for the building of the temple. But Hiram was a gentile, and the land of Israel was given to Israel by divine decree from God. I don't believe it was Solomons place to give part of the promised land away to a gentile King.

Trading Israel's land for a glorious temple and palace was not a good deal in my opinion.

12-13

12 Then Hiram went from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, but they did not please him. 13 So he said, "What kind of cities are these which you have given me, my brother?" And he called them the land of Cabul,[fn] as they are to this day. The Hebrew word "Cabul" means "worthless, good-for-nothing". It would appear that Solomon was trying to be shrewd by giving these worthless cities to Hiram. And shocker-Hiram of course is not pleased.

14 Then Hiram sent the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold." Hiram was disappointed with the cities, but he paid for them anyway with 120 talents of gold.

15 And this is the reason for the labor force which King Solomon raised: to build the house of the LORD, his own house, the Millo,[fn] the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer.

In addition to building the temple, the levy Solomon raised in chapter 5—both of men and of money—was required to finance the very ambitious building projects he undertook.

In those days it was common for kings to raise money for war, but that wasn't the case with Solomon. He concentrated his efforts on construction and fortification, beginning with the temple, then his own house, a house for his wife, and various cities throughout Israel. Solomon also constructed these 3 cities infrastructures mentioned here. Of course Megiddo figures in prophecy as the staging area for the last great battle (Armageddon) in which Christ will defeat the forces of the Antichrist.

16 (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.)

Apparently, Gezer was given to Solomon as a wedding gift.

17-21

17 And Solomon built Gezer, Lower Beth Horon, 18 Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, 19 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.

20 All the people who were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not of the children of Israel— 21 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. The surviving Canaanites were used as slave labor to build Solomon's projects. Now again some scholars disagree here, but my personal opinion is that this was another mistake by Solomon. God strictly commanded that the remnants of these tribes be driven out of the land, not used as slave laborers in Israel.

But Solomon used the remnants of the Canaanite tribes for building up the infrastructure of Israel.

22-25

22 But of the children of Israel Solomon made no forced laborers, because they were men of war and his servants: his officers, his captains, commanders of his chariots, and his cavalry.

23 Others were chiefs of the officials who were over Solomon's work: five hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people who did the work.

24 But Pharaoh's daughter came up from the City of David to her house which Solomon[fn] had built for her. Then he built the Millo.

25 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. It's possible that this was another transgression by Solomon. The way the text reads it implies that he took upon himself the exclusive duties of a priest, offering burnt offerings and incense himself.

However, as is the case in some other passages, this may just refer to Solomon initiating such sacrifices and that he did it

properly through a priest. So was Solomon in sin here? I don't know

Either way, whether he did it himself or did it properly through a priest, the three times a year Solomon offered offerings would have been at Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

26 King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath[fn] on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.

SHOW MAP Solomon built the Israeli navy. And they were docked in Elath – the modern day Israeli resort of Eilat. Here is the only place in the Bible that we see a Navy being assembled.

CLOSE PIC

27 Then Hiram sent his servants with the fleet, seamen who knew the sea, to work with the servants of Solomon. Hiram you'll recall was the king of Tyre, which was the Phoenicians, the most famous sailors of antiquity. Hiram sent his naval experts to launch Solomon's navy.

28 And they went to Ophir, and acquired four hundred and twenty talents of gold from there, and brought it to King Solomon. A talent weighed between 70-100 pounds. On the low-side 420 talents would've been 29,000 pounds of gold... at nearly \$2k an ounce is \$928m today.

We're not sure of the location of Ophir – perhaps Arabia, or the east coast of Africa, or maybe India. But the fact Solomon was willing to build trade alliances with such far-away ports shows his pioneering spirit. Solomon was known around the world.

As we come to chapter 10, we find Solomon at the height of his prosperity, and long before SM, Solomon has gone viral!

1 Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions.

SHOW PIC Scholars are divided between two possible locations for Sheba. One is Yemen, the other is Ethiopia. **CLOSE PIC**

Even if we take the more conservative approach and assume it was Yemen, the 1,500-mile trip from Yemen to Jerusalem would have required a seventy-five-day ride on the back of a camel across the desert. No easy journey for sure.

When verse 1 says that she came to “prove him with hard questions,” it doesn’t mean the queen of Sheba was a skeptic, but rather she was a seeker. She went to great lengths to find the truth, and she’s traveling all this way because not only has she heard of Solomon's wealth, but his wisdom.

And you can be sure that this journey by the queen of Sheba surely created quite a buzz. Imagine the scene as this queen and her exotic caravan pulled into town.

2 She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, (advisors) with camels that bore spices, very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. It seems that the Queen of Sheba had many great challenging questions, and she just pours her heart out to Solomon.

3-5

3 So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for the king that he could not explain it to her.

4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, 5 the food on his table, the seating of his servants, 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 spirit in her. At some point, after Solomon answers all her questions, the queen of Sheba pauses, and looks around, soaking in all that surrounded her.

And what she saw not only captivated her, it took her breath away. Remember this was a Queen, she's a woman familiar with treasures and luxuries. She was completely overwhelmed by the wisdom of Solomon and the glory of his kingdom.

6-8

6 Then she said to the king: "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. 7 However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. 8 Happy are your men and happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! The Queen of Sheba heard wonderful things about Solomon and his kingdom, but upon seeing it with her own eyes she realized it was far greater than she had heard. But most of all, she's taken aback by the wisdom God gave Solomon. And look who the gentile queen gives the credit to!

9 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.” Here we see Old Testament evangelism at

work... God so blesses Israel outsiders can come to only one conclusion – Israel’s God is the one, true God.

In the queen of Sheba’s visit we see Israel fulfilling its God-given purpose of bringing the Gentiles to almighty God.

Jesus actually used the queen of Sheba as an example to the hard-hearted Pharisees. **Matthew 12:38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”**

39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. 42 The queen of the South will rise up in the 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.

The Queen of Sheba so admired Solomon’s wisdom she traveled 1500 miles to sit at his feet. Yet Jesus was far wiser than Solomon. And Jesus came to them, they didn’t have to come to Him - yet the Pharisees still refused to listen to Jesus.

If the Queen of Sheba sought Solomon and the splendor of his kingdom so diligently, how much more should people today seek Jesus and the glory of His Kingdom. Sadly lots of folks will look everywhere else but Jesus for the wisdom they so desperately desire.

10-12

10 Then she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great quantity, and precious stones. There never again came such abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

11 Also, the ships of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought great quantities of almug^[fn] wood and precious stones from Ophir. 12 And the king made steps of the almug wood for the house of the LORD and for the king's house, also harps and stringed instruments for singers. There never again came such almug wood, nor has the like been seen to this day. Almug is a red wood – hard and heavy – perfect for musical instruments.

13 Now King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, besides what Solomon had given her according to the royal generosity. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

Now the rest of the chapter describes more of Solomon's great wealth.

14 The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, Solomon's yearly salary was

666 talents of gold. Obviously, that's a lot of gold – at least 23 tons worth.

But what's intriguing is the association of Solomon with the number "666". Revelation 13 tells us the number of the Antichrist is six – six – six. And this is not the only association between Solomon and six - six - six.

We'll see in a few verses that Solomon's throne. His throne was a sight to behold. It was made of ivory, overlaid with gold. But when you approached it you saw six – six – six. There were six lions to the left – there were six steps in the center – and there were six lions on the right. From right to left...6-6-6.

Solomon has the dubious distinction of being the culprit who introduced idolatry into Israel. And because of this, Solomon is a perfect type of the Antichrist.

Solomon was a man of peace and a temple-builder. And that's how the Antichrist will start out. He'll make a covenant with Israel – a peace treaty, and rebuild their Temple.

People from all over the world journeyed to Jerusalem to marvel at Solomon's wisdom. The Antichrist will likewise impress the world with his wisdom.

Solomon showed keen business prowess and amassed great wealth. We learn in Revelation 18 the Antichrist does the same. The parallels are numerous.

15-17

15 besides that from the traveling merchants, from the income of traders, from all the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country.

16 And King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred shekels of gold went into each shield. 17 He also made three hundred shields of hammered gold; three minas of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. These shields made beautiful displays, but they were of no use in battle. Gold is too heavy and too soft to be used as a metal for effective shields.

18-20

18 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. 19 The throne had six steps, and 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. 20 Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom.” Look at the throne, and you saw six – six – six. This may be coincidental, there are people who dive into the scriptures and find new codes and all these things. Just use discernment.

21 All King Solomon’s drinking vessels were gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. Silver was treated like paper cups. Only gold was good enough for Solomon.

22 For the king had merchant ships^[fn] at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the merchant ships came bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys.^[fn] Solomon also loved exotic pets. He had his own zoo.

23-27

23 So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

24 Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 25 Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year.

26 And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed^[fn] in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. 27 The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland. Here's where you may want to jot down the reference to Ecclesiastes, as Solomon gives a poetic testimony to the vanity of riches. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon powerfully showed that there is no ultimate satisfaction through materialism.

28 Also Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the current price.

Remember this was a violation of Deuteronomy 17 – we're going talk more about this next week. But the king was not to accumulate horses, but Solomon had an excuse... He wasn't using the horse for himself – he was acting as a middleman, and selling them to others

29 Now a chariot that was imported from Egypt cost six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse one hundred and fifty; and thus, through their agents,^[fn] they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria. Next week we'll see the sad and tragic downfall of Solomon.