

June 4-10

## **Week 23**

This week in the story of Scripture we will continue with Act 2, scene 5, reading more about Solomon's reign as we come to the pinnacle of his achievements: the building of the temple in Jerusalem.

Solomon's rule was marked by the success brought about by wisdom. However, we also see troubling signs that Solomon was not as wholly committed to the Lord as it might seem on the surface. In the life of Solomon, we find both the glory and the shame that mark much of the Old Testament story. God worked gloriously among his people, but they struggled with commitment to God and faced the consequences of their disobedience.

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**Day 1**

**Read Proverbs 21-24**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 64**

Again we have a wide range of topics today.

Look, for instance, at Proverbs 21:31. You probably do not own a battle horse, but the principle in this passage is that we can have assets that lead to success in life, but we should depend on the Lord for that success. So be prepared, but trust the Lord.

At Proverbs 22:17 we see a shift. Here the verses are not as uniform, varying in the number of poetic lines, and we see topics that were common in the book's prologue.

*Do any of these proverbs suggest that you need to shift your way of thinking about life or need to think more carefully about some areas?*

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**Day 2**

**Read 1 Kings 5-6; 2 Chronicles 2-3**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 65**

King Solomon gathered building materials for the construction of the temple for the name of the Lord (see 1 Kings 5:5, an allusion to the proclamation of 2 Samuel 7:13). The name of the Lord has to do with both God's character and his fame, and the temple would be Solomon's greatest legacy.

In honor of the Lord, Solomon used the highest quality of materials, including gold, for overlaying many of the temple's surfaces. These passages emphasize the quality of materials and the care with which the temple was constructed.

From a New Testament standpoint, Christ followers are now God's temple, with Christ himself as the cornerstone (see 1 Peter 2:5-6).

*How might you relate to others in the body of Christ in a way that expresses care and quality this week?*

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**Day 3**

**Read 1 Kings 7-8; Psalm 11**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 66**

Today we read about Solomon's palace complex, the crafting of furniture and utensils for the temple, and the dedication of the temple.

The placing of the account of Solomon's house here in the book's structure is significant. In effect, Solomon interrupted the completion of the temple in order to build his house and the house of one of his wives, Pharaoh's daughter. Although the developing story depicts a glorious dedication ceremony and God's Shekinah presence descending on the temple, the passage on Solomon's house reveals that he had a divided heart. This becomes clearer as 1 Kings continues, and it had tragic consequences.

*What relationships, projects, or goals threaten to divide your heart spiritually, diverting your attention from God's cause in the world?*

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**Day 4****Read 2 Chronicles 4-7; Psalms 134; 136****Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 67**

Second Chronicles 4–7 is a parallel passage to the narrative in 1 Kings 7–8 we read yesterday. The prayer at the end of 2 Chronicles differs slightly from the one in 1 Kings. Many ancient speeches were abbreviated or paraphrased by ancient writers, so slight differences are understandable. The writer of Chronicles drew on a tradition that had Solomon quoting Psalm 132:8-10 at the end of his prayer.

Notice God's response at the beginning of 2 Chronicles 7. The Shekinah glory of the Lord represented God's presence. The presence of the Lord is one of the great themes of Scripture. God wants to live among his people in an active way. He ultimately fulfilled this desire through the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell the church as the new temple (see Acts 2).

Notice the Lord's response to Solomon.

*Praise God today that his eyes are open and his ears are attentive to his people.  
Ask God to watch over some aspect of your life today.*

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## **Day 5**

### **Read Psalms 146-150**

#### **Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 68**

Sometimes in our relationships we need days to stop and focus on the people we love, telling them all we appreciate about them. Today is such a day in your relationship with God.

Fittingly, the book of Psalms ends with majestic psalms of praise to God. God is praised for his character, compassion, creation, restoration of Jerusalem, and victory. Notice that many verses speak about God (“his name alone is exalted,” Psalm 148:13), and many more are exhortations to praise God (“Praise him, all his angels,” Psalm 148:2). Yet these can be turned into personal prayers.

*Use these psalms as prayers of praise to God, focusing on his character, compassion, creation, redemption of your soul, and victory.*

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**Day 6**

**Read 1 Kings 9; 2 Chronicles 8; Proverbs 25-27**

**Act 2 - Scene 5 - Reading 69**

Notice two things about God's response to Solomon after the temple and other building programs had been completed.

1. As the main actor of the story, God determined the events in Israel in response to either faithfulness or unfaithfulness.
2. The Israelites were to live their lives with reference to the covenant, so idolatry was a special focus of the warnings here; this will be significant as Solomon's story develops.

Perhaps the king's dealings with Hiram and the mention of the forced labor it took to build Solomon's projects begin to give us glimpses at Solomon's insensitivity to the people he dealt with.

*With whom in your life are you most likely to be insensitive?*

Pay special attention to Proverbs 26:4-5. These two proverbs, which seem contradictory on the surface, illustrate that the proverbs give guidelines that address various situations in life. Sometimes it is appropriate to respond to a fool one way, and at other times we should respond to a fool differently. Discernment is needed.

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**Day 7**

**Reading Summary for Week 23**

Our readings about the temple's construction and dedication have reminded us of the readings for week 7, the building and dedication of the wilderness tabernacle. God's magnificent presence was manifested in both houses of worship. The psalms we've read crescendo in praise to this glorious Lord. We've seen David's wise son ruling God's people from the Holy City with God's glory all around. No wonder this prefigures Christ's eternal reign, previewed in Revelation 21–22.

**Prayer/Meditation**

Glorious Lord, you alone are worthy of worship, worthy of all the resources—energy and skill and costly materials—that went into the temple. I join Solomon and all Israel in praising you for your majestic greatness and goodness to your people. Yet I also join with them in confessing that your presence can never be limited to only one place. For as Solomon said, “Even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain you, much less this temple I have built” (2 Chronicles 6:18). Amen.

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