

Monday - Week Twenty-one

Lesson Sixty: Solomon, David's Successor

Read: 1 Chronicles 28, 29; 1 Kings 1:1-2:12

Summary: The transition from David to Solomon was not a smooth one. God kept His promise that one of David's descendants would succeed him as king.

Background and Comments

- The first four verses of 1 Kings tell us about a unique plan to keep the aging king warm at night: a beautiful young virgin named Abishag! The sacred writer adds that David did not have intimate relations with her.
- David's family problems continued right up to the end. Adonijah tried to steal the hearts of the people by proclaiming himself king. King David, even in his weakened state, acted decisively by proclaiming Solomon king with much fanfare. Even at the end of his life David was a fighter.
- With this lesson we say good-bye to David. What have you learned from this great hero of the faith?

Lessons for Today

- In 1 Kings 2 David gave Solomon instructions about being the king. It's noteworthy that David spoke first about remaining faithful to the Lord. In God's Kingdom leadership is more a matter of godliness than techniques. God is more concerned about what is in a leader's heart than He is about how efficient or smart the leader is. How can you apply this in the leadership roles that God has given to you?
- 1 Chronicles 28:9 tells us that God *searches every heart and understands every motive*. Again we see that why we do things is just as important (even more important!) than what we do. When we teach and train children we need to remember to talk about good motivation instead of simply stressing "doing the right thing".
- 1 Chronicles 29:1-9 is exciting to read! God's people saw the excellent example set by their leaders in the area of giving and then gave generously as well. How is "giving" talked about in your church? Do the congregation's leaders talk about giving as an exciting chance to do God's work?

Read: Psalm 101, Philippians 1.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, like David I put my life into Your hands. Amen.

Tuesday - Week Twenty-one

Lesson Sixty-one: Solomon's Wisdom

Read: 1 Kings 3 and 10

Summary: Solomon's wisdom has never been equaled in the history of the world (except of course by Jesus). God certainly blessed Solomon!

Background and Comments

- Some people think that Solomon simply asked to be very, very smart. Solomon did not ask for knowledge but for wisdom. Literally he asked God for a "hearing heart" (that is the Hebrew of 1 Kings 3:9). He wanted to hear what God said to him and to hear what God's people said to him. Why did he want this gift? He knew that he would need this wisdom to rule God's people. This was a selfless request on Solomon's part.
- We have often heard the account of the two prostitutes who both claimed the baby ... so often that we don't get amazed at the wisdom of Solomon's answer! Today we would have resorted to DNA testing to figure out whose baby this was. Solomon's method was much quicker ... and more profound.
- Solomon's riches amaze us. When God blesses someone He doesn't go half-way!

Lessons for Today

- This lesson gives us a chance to think about the difference between knowledge and wisdom. There are plenty of knowledgeable scientists, inventors, teachers and doctors. Wisdom is a completely different matter. In the book of Proverbs Mr. Wisdom himself (Solomon) tells us: *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge (1:7)*. Fearing God means to respect God above all else, to trust in Him and to obey Him. How can you pursue wisdom today?
- When the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon she learned about the true God (cf 1 Kings 10:9). This tells us once again that Solomon's wisdom revolved around the Lord.

Read: Psalm 102, Philippians 2.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, I humbly ask You to give me wisdom so that I can perform the tasks that You have for me. Remind me that this wisdom is found in the pages of the Bible. Make me wise, Lord ... and then let me use that wisdom to do important things in Your kingdom. Amen.

Wednesday - Week twenty-one

Catechism Review

Read Questions 153-160

1. The creation - evolution debate is not just an argument about how the world began. It is about a whole way of looking at life. Is the world a special creation of a loving God or the result of a random sequence of events? In other words, who is "in charge" in the world: God or people (the "high point" of evolution)? Why, do you suppose, so many decide to believe in evolution even though the scientific evidence is not at all convincing?

2. How would you respond: "God created the first forms of life and then evolution took over."

3. Name two ways that God has preserved your life today.

4. Pick one part of God's creation that has always fascinated you. Write down two reasons that it couldn't have come about without a powerful Creator's hand.

5. What do we learn about God from His creation?

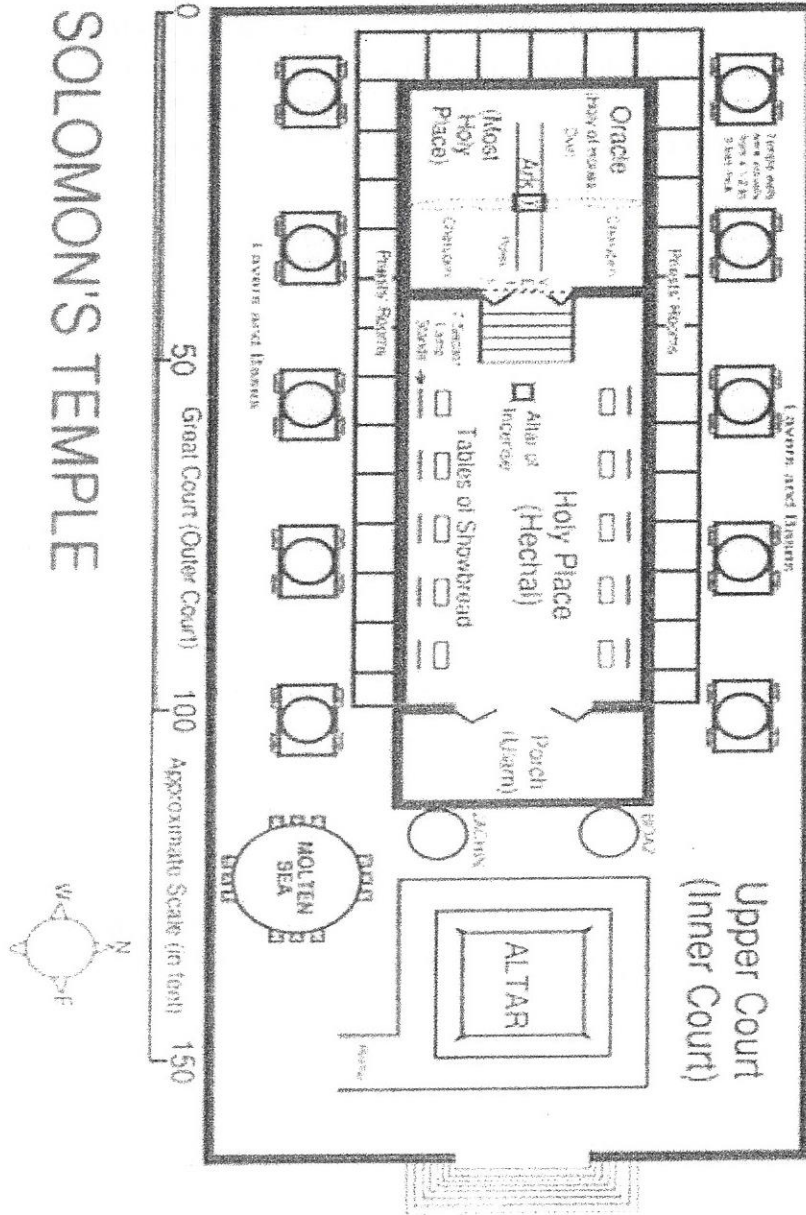
Read: Psalm 103; Philippians 3.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for this wonderful world. Amen.

Thursday - Week Twenty-one

Lesson Sixty-two: Solomon's Temple

Read: 1 Kings 5-8 and study this drawing.



Read: Psalm 104, Philippians 4.

Prayer: Dear Lord, You allowed Solomon to build a tremendous building for Your people to worship You. Help me to keep our sanctuary beautiful and well kept. Amen.

Friday - Week Twenty-one

Life Questions

Topic/Question: What role does reason have in the study of the Bible? What about authors like CS Lewis who wrote “reasonable” defenses of Christianity?

Bible References and Considerations

- In 1 Corinthians 1:17 - 2:16 St. Paul tells us that we dare not put our reason over the words of the Bible. The first verse states: *... to preach the gospel -- not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.* Paul literally wrote that if we preach the Gospel with words of human wisdom (trying to make it “reasonable”) then we make the cross of Christ ineffective. There are all sorts of Biblical teachings that don’t make sense to the human mind:
 - A. That Jesus can be true God and truly human at the same time
 - B. That the sins of the world were forgiven by one Person’s death
 - C. That it’s our fault if we go to hell but God gets the credit if we go to heaven. (That God chose some to go to heaven but didn’t choose others to go to hell.)
 - D. That Jesus could perform miracles
 - E. The resurrection, the Trinity, etc.
- Does reason have any part to play in matters of faith? Certainly. We need to use our reason to read, think about and speak about what the Bible says. This puts reason into the role of a servant instead of a master. This serving role for reason is a God-pleasing one.

Practically Speaking

- Reason also tries to make sense of everything going on in our lives (why our loved one got cancer, why we got in a car accident, etc.). There are no specific answers to many of those questions except to say that God’s will is going to be done through them.
- CS Lewis was a Christian writer who lived in England. His most famous book was “Mere Christianity”. He once wrote, “I am not asking anyone to accept Christianity if his best reasoning tells him that the weight of the evidence is against it.” Why is that kind of talk dangerous?

Read: Psalm 105; Colossians 1.

Prayer: Dear Father, let my faith continue to be rooted in Your Word. Amen.