

# The king - the builder

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[0:00] Let me tell you what's in the chapter. If you have it in front of you, you can see it. It says that he finished building the house of the Lord!

And at the end of the chapter, it also mentions a finishing. Chapter, verse 25, it says, He so fulfilled the temple obligations, which you could translate as saying, He fulfilled the house, or perhaps even more literally, He brought peace to the house.

Everything was brought to a satisfactory and beautiful conclusion. What else happens in the chapter? Well, it says in chapter 9, verse 2, that the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon.

So, God had appeared to Solomon at the beginning, he appears to him again, and he tells him about the answer to his prayer.

And that's in verses 2, no, 3 to 9. I have heard the prayer and the plea that you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built.

[1:38] By putting my name there forever, my eyes and my heart will always be there. After this, we're told in verse 10, Then, at the end of the 20 years during which Solomon built these two houses, the house of the Lord and the house of the king, King Solomon gave 20 towns in Galilee to Hiram, king of Tyre, because Hiram had supplied him with the cedar and the pine and the gold.

So they come to settle up at the end. And it tells us that Hiram was not particularly pleased. He says, What sort of towns are these that you have given me, my brother?

Well, he still calls him my brother, but he's obviously not very pleased about them. He called them the land of Kabul. And if you have a footnote there, it says, Kabul sounds like the Hebrew for good for nothing.

So he says, That's a rubbish bill that you've given me. What else happens? Verse 15, Here is an account of the forced labor King Solomon conscripted to build the Lord's temple, or the Lord's house, his own house, the supporting terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and various other places. It reports on the labor force who built the house. And you've got an account of that down to around verse 23. And the other constructions and cities and storehouses he built.

[3:14] Notice verse 18, as well as the storehouses and the towns for his chariots, and whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, throughout all the territory he ruled.

And it also tells us in verse 24 about Pharaoh's daughter had come up from the city of David to the house Solomon had built for her. And he built the supporting terraces.

And some of your versions, it might say Milo or Milo. Anybody got that for supporting terraces?

Yeah. Okay. So it was something else he built. And in verse 25, as we've mentioned, it talks about finishing the house.

And is there a common theme? And I think there is. And the common theme is, oh, sorry, one more thing, verse 25, he also built ships.

The common theme is building. Throughout, it says he built this, he built that, he built this, he finished building that. So if you look at all the times we've used the word built, does that show up?

[4:22] I'm trying to do a very clever thing with a screen to put built in red. Does it work? All the sentences we looked at and went through, they're all about building. And I think this is one of the themes of this chapter, that Solomon has what we would nowadays call a passion for

building.

Did you notice the words desire and delight? It says it in verse 1. He had achieved all he desired and delighted to do.

And you have the same thing in verse 19, the things he desired to build. He desired his delight to build. Whatever he desired to build, verse 19.

So we might say, building was his passion. Not Bob the builder, but Solomon the builder. Different leaders have different things they're enthusiastic about, different things they're driven to.

Quite often with kings, it's war. They like to expand their territory. They can't be content with the territory they've got. So they go and make war on somebody. An expansion, an expansion.

[5:37] But with Solomon, it was building. What did he desire and delight to do? He desired and delighted to build. What would have been his favorite program on television?

Grand Designs. He just loved building things. And this chapter is about the things he started to build, and he got to the end, and he finished the building work.

And it talks about finishing, doesn't it? He finished the work that he set out to do. Interesting that Jesus, too, was conscious of having a program before him, and he said to his father, I have finished the work you gave me to do.

Interesting, this idea of having a work, starting it, finishing it. Solomon did. Jesus did. And I want to think about Jesus, because in his passion for building, Solomon prefigures Jesus.

Because the passion that Solomon had is a passion that Jesus also had. Jesus is a builder. We don't often think of him in those terms, say Jesus is a savior, Jesus is a shepherd, Jesus is a king.

[7:03] But it's true, and this passage points this out, that Jesus is a builder. Here's some texts. And interesting, Jesus is a temple builder, among other things.

Here it is in John chapter 2, verse 19, where Jesus said to his opponents, destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.

Would you like to look at the text? You might like to look at it, just to make sure that I've got it right. It's John chapter 2. Other people use the word build.

Jesus doesn't actually use the word build. The Jews replied, it has taken 46 years to build this temple, and you're going to raise it in three days. But Jesus definitely said, verse 19, destroy this temple, I will raise it, which is a building idea, I will raise it again in three days.

But the temple he had spoken of was his body. And at least in this, Jesus is a builder. The temple was destroyed, it was built up again.

[8:18] And that refers to Jesus himself. He rose on the third day. Here's another text in which Jesus speaks about building.

It's Matthew 16, where he says, I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not have stronger strength, shall not prevail against it.

Yes, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. That's a building statement, isn't it? It's a statement of a plan. I will build my church.

And as I was saying to the boys and girls, and I'm sure everyone knows this, in Christian talk, church is not this stuff, bricks and plaster and wood.

That's a church building. The church is us. It's the people of God. And Jesus says, I will build this community, this nation, this civilization.

[9:27] I will build my church and it will be so strong that hell itself will not have more power. I will build my church.

And interestingly, Jesus' follower Paul had a passion for building. He had a rather single-minded determination to build.

And when he spoke to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 14, he said this, I want everything you do when you meet together before the building of the church.

All things must be done for the building of the church. That's just one sentence out of a whole lot of things he said, but I think it is a truly representative sentence of what he means.

So, Solomon was a builder. And Jesus was a builder. And Paul was a builder.

[10:28] And they had this enthusiasm and drive to see the church built. Built as distinct from, demolished, divided, let all things be done for the up-building of the church as distinct from just attracting attention

to me.

It's to do with us as a community being built. So, we're not talking about do everything for self-glorification or attention-seeking.

Don't, it says, do everything for amusement, so we've all had fun. Don't do everything for escapism, so for temporarily, we've forgotten real life. He says, do everything for the up-building of the church. And I want to ask, if Jesus had a passion for building the church, and Paul had a passion for building the church, I wonder if we share that drive, that enthusiasm.

I wonder if we've cottoned on to that. That's one of the, well, Paul says, it's the main thing for when we meet together. It certainly isn't the only thing that Christians aspire to, but it's certainly one of them.

[11:49] And may I ask you, do you share a passion for the building of the community, the church? Is it anything that you have ever consciously thought of?

How can the church of Jesus Christ be built? When we come together this Sunday, how can up-building take place?

Can I pray for it? Can I be praying, Lord, when we come together, build up those people, build up my brothers and sisters, build up such and such a person who's struggling, I know, build up such and such a person who's a bit wobbly in their faith, build up such and such a person who needs friends around him or her.

Is it something we're active in? Of course, Paul says, all things must be done for the up-building of the church. Is it something you could say, oh, I could actually contribute, not by laying a stone or mixing up some sand and cement, but I could contribute by making sure before I go home that I've had a word with so and so and said to them, I'm praying for you, or said to them, how are you getting on with such and such?

Or something like that. the passion for building. Let's move now back to 1 Kings 9 and go a little bit further.

[13:33] Because what we have now is what God says, or that's what we're going to look at next, is what God says in this reply, verse 3 and onwards, where he talks about the prayer that he has answered.

The Lord appeared a second time to him. So, it says that he appeared in Gibeon and then this second time as he had appeared previously.

Just before we move on, would you like to turn forward to 11 chapter 9 where, I don't want to spoil the story, but it does say at this point that the Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice.

So, God appeared twice to Solomon and in chapter 11 verse 9 he's saying that was a blessing for Solomon but it was also, what shall I say, it was a privilege but when he turned away it made God even more angry because twice he had blessed him by appearing to him.

Do you see what I'm trying to say? So, the twice was a blessing for Solomon but it also put an obligation on him. God had appeared to him twice and still the silly man turned away from God.

[15:14] So, if we've received from the Lord like Solomon maybe the Lord has spoken to us more than twice. there's an obligation on us.

I was just thinking the other day I think it was last Sunday somebody was kind enough to say if you come to Calvary church you get good teaching.

We pray that that would be the case and if that is the case it's by God's grace. But in some ways you don't really want to come to a church with good teaching. in some ways you don't really want to come to a church with good teaching because God will expect more of us if we've had good teaching.

God has not perhaps spoken to us twice but maybe out of 50 Sundays God's spoken to us 48 of them. And if God has spoken to us all that time he is expecting something from us and he will say and you behaved in that way after you received all that teaching that's how your life was after all the times I've appeared to you and spoken to you.

See it puts a responsibility on us which is a bit uncomfortable actually. So that's why I say in some ways you don't really want to come to a church with good teaching because God expects more of us if we do.

[16:42] Go to a church that doesn't have good teaching and then God would expect less. Do you see what I mean? So what is he saying as he appears to Solomon?

He says I've heard your prayer and the plea that you have made before me I have consecrated this house which you have built by putting I have consecrated it which you have built by putting my name there my eyes and my heart will always be there.

So there's Solomon does that look at all like Solomon? I think that's a very good likeness. He's praying about the temple and that's what he did in a previous chapter long long prayer and he was asking that the temple would come on stream as the place where God meets man where humanity can approach God and find him and God is saying I've heard that prayer and I'm going to do that. So here's an answered prayer and let's just see what I've got here. Yes, what's the answer? Well the answer says I've consecrated this temple.

Worth looking at each individual phrase. I've consecrated this temple. So it's our holy space. Now nowadays in the new covenant we don't have holy spaces but in that old covenant there was a holy space.

[18:12] That's a place where God particularly is. Take off your shoes the place where you're standing is holy ground. Churches aren't like that nowadays just places where people meet but for the temple it was a holy space and it says my name is there.

I've put my name there forever father. So if in that old way of doing things you went to the temple you would meet God because his character, his being, his person was there.

I put my name there. If you go to the temple you meet the father. In the New Testament there's another place where it says if you have something you have seen the father.

Do you know what it says? If you have seen the father. If you have seen me Jesus said to Philip if you have seen me you have seen the father. So Jesus does what the temple used to do if you like. It says I put my eyes there. So eyes are how God watches. His eyes are there to watch his people to see what their needs are to observe them.

[19:25] And it says his heart is there. Heart in the Bible is the place of wisdom where God will decide things and guide. So that's the promise for the temple.

It's a very good promise, a wonderful thing to have. And let's just see what on earth am I putting here. Yeah, I think I know what I'm putting.

He now says that's the promise. However, verse 4, there is an if. So the temple has this on a certain condition.

If, verse 4, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever as I promised David your father when I said you shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.

But if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe my commands and decrees I've given you and go off and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I've consecrated for my name.

[20:44] So there's an if and the if refers to the king. So you Solomon being the king have a crucial role in the way this temple continues to operate and it's also the future kings verse 6 if you or your sons and it's also there's the Solomon and his sons and it's also the people as well.

Verse 9 says people will answer because they have forsaken the Lord their God there's a plural. So the if for the temple is to do with King Solomon now you're a key figure in this King Solomon and your sons after you and the whole of your people as well so you're all bound up in this together. And we'll look at the if in a moment. There's the people. If this if so you could think about the theology of the if is it saying you are earning my blessing.

I don't think it's saying that. It's not saying if you're good enough I will bless you. But it is the if of responsive relationship.

I'm making these gracious promises says God. I'm going to I promise these things and I want you to relate to me in this. I want you to respect what I'm doing.

[22:17] I want there to be a degree of gratitude and responsiveness and if there isn't then our relationship is put under strain. So that's the if and that's what we're going to look at for a little while.

Let's look at it in detail. So there's the temple which is at the center of it. And it gives us two possibilities. So let's look at the first possibility if if so it's verse four if you walk before me there's always in Hebrew when it says before me there's an idea of the face before my face if you walk before my face in integrity of heart now what's that a genuine heart if you walk before my face with a genuine heart and you do the things I say and you do all I command and observe my decrees and my laws different bits of vocabulary there to do with the ways of God if you if you walk before my face with a genuine heart and you set yourself to obey the things

I command and walk in my ways then okay if you do that then well what's the then then verse 5 I will I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever as I promised David your father when I said you shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel then the kingdom will be raised up temples they're going to be at the centre of it and your king will be forever they will never fail to be a king so that's the if and the consequence that's just saying what it says there's an alternative on the other hand if you well let's see what it says verse 6 if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe my commands and decrees that I have given you so you don't do my ways and if you go off and serve other gods and worship them then consequence if you do that then then well then what then verse 7

I will cut off Israel from the land so you'll be expelled you won't have a place anymore I will reject this temple now actually literally it says I will send away the temple so the presence of God is sort of sent away it's a funny word I don't know it's translated reject but literally it says send away and it says Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples so people will say rubbish terrible place it'll become an object of ridicule and although this temple is now imposing all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and this temple those who pass by will scoff because the Lord has done these things and it says that what he has done is it says the word disaster somewhere doesn't it somebody help me yeah end of verse nine the Lord has brought all this disaster on them now in the Old Testament that is that is really the worst thing that can happen all of this is the worst thing the Old Testament doesn't give us a doctrine of hell as such but it says this is absolute the most terrible thing the blessing is to be brought near to God to have God living with you to have his king living with you that's the blessing that the Old Testament holds out and to have that all unraveled and all undone is that it is just the worst cut off from the land no place sent away from the temple no presence of God become an object of scorn the Lord brings evil and disaster and those who pass by will scoff I'm just telling you what it says in that prayer and this is the dynamic of the temple so you're thinking now how on earth are you going to make this into something Christian because is that how Christianity works so let's look at it carefully so is this requiring perfection is it saying if you're perfect then you'll be blessed to which

[27:51] I answer that is not what it's saying because it says verse 4 if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness as David your father did yes so it's being as David did was David perfect no he failed spectacularly on in at least one way but David never became a Baal worshipper David never said to the Lord get lost what David did say was I went wrong you were right I went wrong I want to come back to you so I don't think this is a promise requiring perfection it's saying this dynamic of the temple will work if you simply live as a you know as we would say as a Christian you know and from a Christian point of view we know that to have a heart that's a genuine heart and a penitent heart and a soft heart and a responsive heart and obedient heart we need a new heart don't we it doesn't say that here but that's really what they needed without that they couldn't do it it's a promise requiring a new heart in

Christianity when we come to the Lord Jesus he takes away our old heart and he gives us a new heart here's another question did they manage it does the history of the kings say that they did this they did walk before the Lord and do his commands and not turn away to other gods and the answer is no they managed to fail in appalling ways and over the 400 year period of the book of

kings at the end of it they have done all the things they're not supposed to do and the interesting thing is that God is patient with them for 400 years but he does this he does cut them off from the land he does send away the temple he does make the land an object of scorn and he brought that evil and disaster they didn't manage it but

Jesus our king did keep all that perfectly he did all those things the fascinating thing is that the experience of Jesus was that he experienced this so I say that again that Jesus lived this but experienced this and I think I've got it on the other slide well would you like to turn to Matthew keep one finger in 1 Kings Matthew 27 the bit in 1 Kings where it says people will pass by and be appalled and scoff and say why has the Lord brought such disaster and in

Matthew 27 verse 38 it says that when Jesus was crucified it says two robbers were crucified with him one on the right and one on the left and those who passed by hurled insults at him shaking their heads and referring to the temple you who said you're going to destroy the temple and build it in three days save yourself come down from the cross there's a striking similarity of wording there isn't there they'll pass by and scoff and that's exactly the experience of Jesus they passed by him on the cross and scoffed he lived this but experienced that so let's summarize that

Jesus lived in perfect relationship with his father and yet was treated as if he had failed in that miserably he paid the price he was forsaken by God my God my God why have you forsaken me people passed by and scoffed at him and he did it so that we could have that perfect relationship that the temple speaks of he suffered the penalty so that we could experience the blessing he's a great king isn't he fantastic king that he should do that let me ask you what you say if you notionally pass by the cross of Christ if you were you have to use your imagination if you were passing by and you see Jesus dying on the cross would you say you fool you twit you said you were so powerful and look at you so weak and shameful was that what you would say would you be one of the people who mocked him and scoffed at him

[33:43] I think you might well have been the song writer of the song that we sang said what did he say thank you ashamed I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers there was a time when we would have mocked him or at least passed by and thought I'm glad I'm nothing to do with him but what would you do now this minute if you were to pass by Jesus on the cross would you say to him would you be rude would you scoff would you mock or would you worship would you thank him would you would you be so grateful for what he has done for you to endure the penalty so that you could go free bearing shame and scoffing rude in my place condemned he stood sealed my pardon with his blood hallelujah what a savior when

I survey the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died my richest gain I count but loss and pour content on all my pride forbid it lord that I should boast save in the cross of Christ my God all the vain things that charm me most I sacrifice them to his blood where would you be on that let's finish 1 kings 9 so I'm just going to take us very quickly through what happens next how does it all end up well we have to come back next week and probably the week after that as well to hear how it all ends up and we're not told how it all ends up as yet but we are told that something of the shine seems to go off the glory of

Solomon the arrangement he had with Hiram which started out so positively is a bit unsatisfactory I'm not entirely clear how it all works but there's Solomon seems to end up owing Hiram money so he gives him the towns and Hiram says well these are pretty rubbish towns that's not satisfactory if you go on down we find this I find this rather perplexing the thing about Gezer Pharaoh king of Egypt attacked and captured Gezer I did put all these towns on a little map and they're all in strategic defensive places guarding routes trade routes some of them way off in the desert the ships are way down on the Persian Gulf would we that bit down there not very good at geography I should have done a map but completely forgot what

I was saying verse 19 one of the things that he built was store cities and towns for chariots can't can't help can't help feeling there's a little echo there who else in the bible built store cities and had chariots pharaoh pharaoh the king of egypt solomon is beginning to bit a little bit like pharaoh actually pharaoh had forced labor and solomon is beginning to look a little bit like him i know it says that he didn't make any of his people slaves well he didn't make them slaves permanently but he did make sure that they had a period of time where they were taken off to work and then they could have some time off but it wasn't popular and that comes up later it also talks about the people that

were in the land verse 21 the amorites hittites perizzites hivites and jebusites the people that the israelites were incapable of exterminating now actually they were supposed to have exterminated these people so this is a reference really to israel's impotence she doesn't do what she was supposed to do she's half hearted so that's all about forced labor jesus does a whole lot better than solomon on forced labor jesus does not have workers under compulsion our king has servants who are willing and follow him willingly a whole lot better than solomon solomon married foreign wives verse 24 talks about pharaoh's daughter and that becomes a theme in itself later the foreign wives just think john and i both married foreign wives aren't we we're quite happy with the arrangement so but he built many good and profitable things verse 25 he went up to the temple and did the right thing there and he also went and built ships and they went sailing and that was very profitable too so how does this chapter end up well i think it ends up saying solomon was a great and glorious king but and the but's going to get bigger there's a but he's not the saviour there's many things we can learn from him but don't follow him in every single way it's a pity to have a but but i think for each of our lives we'd say lord you know there's a but but we live by grace we live with a king who forgives us and for one and for some reason best known to himself will one day say to all his people well done good and faithful servant enter into the joy of your lord many servants one saviour let's sing together