

WEEK TWENTY THREE INTRODUCTION

This week we encounter Solomon's building campaigns. Most significantly, he builds the temple of the Lord and his own palace. While he completed the temple in seven years (1 Kings 6:38), it took him 13 to build his own palace (1 Kings 7:1). The Scripture text does not make explicit judgment, but, for all the grandeur Solomon attributes to the temple and its opening, his priorities seem off. Not only does he take almost double the amount of time to build his palace as the temple, but his palace is also much larger than the temple. The CSB converts the cubits into feet. In 1 Kings 6:2 the completed temple stands 90 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 45 feet high. According to the dimensions in 1 Kings 7:2, Solomon's palace dwarfs the temple at 150 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. Solomon spends more time and capital on a house for himself and his posterity than he does on the temple of the Lord. Remember Jesus' words a thousand years after Solomon built the temple in Matthew 6:21, *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*. Solomon's story stands testifying of God's grace as well as Solomon's folly.

KEY SCRIPTURE

A king's heart is like channeled water in the LORD's hand: He directs it wherever he chooses. — **Proverbs 21:1**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Do you think the time, money, and labor Solomon spent on building his palace in comparison to the Lord's temple shows something about his heart and priorities? Identify times and situations in your own life where your investment in yourself and other priorities outweighed your commitment to the Lord and His kingdom.

2 Chronicles 3:1 tells us that Solomon built the temple on Mount Moriah where *the LORD appeared to his father David*. The writer of Chronicles directs our attention back to 2 Samuel 24:11-25. What happened in that passage? What significance links the temple with that episode? What other passage refers to Mount Moriah? What parallels do you notice? How do these things shed great light upon Jesus who was crucified near Mount Moriah?

As Solomon dedicates the temple, what happens in 1 Kings 8:10? Where else do we see the glory of God and a cloud paired? Why do you think God's glory *prevented* the priests from continuing in their duties? How should this instruct us regarding our activity and God's glory?

1 Kings 8:27 states, *But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!* God chooses to covenantally manifest His presence in the temple, but God does not dwell within space (or time). God is *omnipresent* and *immense*. By *immensity* we mean that God is not and cannot be confined within any concept of spatial measurement. God transcends space because He does not carry, as Creator, creaturely limitation. *Immensity* in this way is a subset of God's *infinity*. Yet, God is not removed from His creation as He is *omnipresent*. Stephen Charnock writes, "God, because infinite, fills all, yet so as not to be contained in them. He is from the height of the heavens to the bottom of the deeps, in every point of the world, and in the whole circle of it, yet not limited by it, but beyond it." Meditate on the bigness of God as testified in this verse. How does God's *immensity* and *omnipresence* encourage you? Are there ways you've conceived of God that do not line up with this truth?

In Psalm 11, where does the Psalmist find comfort? How does he describe his enemies? What does this Psalm teach us about *where* the Lord is? What is God's relationship to the world of humanity in this Psalm?

What standard does Solomon use to guide worship at the newly established temple in 2 Chronicles 8:12-16? Why do you think that is significant?

Psalm 150:6 closes, *Let everything that breathes praise the LORD. Hallelujah!* Do all people praise the Lord? Why not? What link can you drive between Jesus' final commission to His disciples in Matthew 28:16-20 and the worship of our Triune God among the peoples?

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

“Good news from a distant land is like cold water to a parched throat.” -**Proverbs 25:25**

Our world is in desperate need of good news. Who do you know that needs to hear the good news of God's love in Jesus? Pray for them and reach out!