

## Dr. John Oswalt, Kings, Session 9

### 1 Kings 9-10

© 2024 John Oswalt and Ted Hildebrandt

Heavenly conditions and earthly glory. Last week, we saw that eighth chapter, and I told you that was Solomon's high point. It was really, really him at his best.

And now we see some glimpses of something not quite right. Notice how chapter nine begins, verse one. What do you think about that? You know, there's nothing in the Bible by accident.

If it's there, it's there because God, the Holy Spirit, wanted it to be there. So, what do you think's going on there? When Solomon had finished building the temple of the Lord and the royal palace, he had achieved all he desired to do. What's that about? Pardon? It's about Solomon's to-do list, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

I want to build a temple for God. I want to build a palace. I want to do, I want to do, I want to do, I want to do, I want to do, I want to do.

Now again, we mustn't sell him short. God had told David that Solomon would build a temple. So, he's not really doing something in defiance of God.

And yet, I wonder if, in fact, we can do God's will in our own strength and in our own way. So yeah, that's what God wanted, but who did it? How did it get done? I wonder if his desire for the Lord was at its end, the desire that he had to do. Okay, yes.

Were his desires for the Lord at an end and had been replaced by his desires for what he wanted to accomplish? Maybe for the Lord. All right, the longer I live, the longer I realize how tangled motives can become. Is this for him, or is this for me? So, you say, well, can you prove that? No, I can't, but I simply want to say the way that verse is stated, what he wanted to do, I think is significant.

So, the next thing that's important, I believe, is the Lord appeared to him a second time as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. Why do you think that that point is made? This is the second appearance. Why do you think we're reminded of that? We wouldn't have to be.

Well, if you're not going to answer, I suppose I'll have to. I think we're intended to think of these as bookends. Here's the appearance at the beginning, in the freshness of the morning.

And here's another appearance, coming after Solomon had accomplished all he wanted to. So, what about the two promises? What about the tone of the two? Can

you read it? What's the tone in this first appearance in chapter three? Yes, it's very positive, isn't it? We see it right there at the beginning. It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this.

And it goes on because you've asked this and not asked for a long life, riches, or the life of your enemies. So, I'm going to give you what you asked for: wisdom and understanding, and I'm also going to give you what you didn't ask for: riches and honor.

But notice that last sentence: if you'll walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days. So, yes, God is pleased, God is giving him all he asked and more, but there is that issue. Now, look at chapter nine.

What's the tone here? More warning. More of a warning, yes, yes. It's cooler.

Okay, you've done this. You've built me a glorious temple. Good for you.

I've heard your prayer and your plea, which you've made before me. Thank the Lord. And I have sanctified this house that you built by putting my name there forever.

My eyes and my heart will be there for all time. People ask me always, well, what's your attitude about Israel? The state of Israel today. And I say, well, there are two things in the middle of the road, a dead chicken and a yellow line, and I'm in the middle of the road.

No, Israel is not a believing state today. 90% of the Israelis are atheists. So, no, I do not believe that we are required to rubber-stamp everything that the state of Israel does today.

On the other hand, there can be no question that God's eyes and God's heart are on these people and in this place. And I think it's still true that those who bless Israel will be blessed, and those who curse Israel will be cursed. So, am I going to be in favor of spending money to protect Israel from its enemies? Yes, I am.

But by the same token, I don't think we have to rubber-stamp everything that an atheistic state decides to do. That's free, I didn't plan to say that. But anyway, my eyes and my heart will be there for all time.

Jerusalem. Jerusalem. I, again, I seem to be rather discursive tonight.

I hear a lot of talk today about, well, with COVID, it's clear that we've got to, the church is not a place, it's a people. Yes, that's true. That's true.

But it's also clear to me that throughout history, God has cared about places, spots that somehow symbolize who we are. We, just as brothers and sisters, have to get together in a place. So yeah, do we need a multi, multi-billion dollar auditorium? I don't think so.

But do we need places? Places where we can come together and say, I belong to you. You belong to me. Yeah, how that's going to work out, I don't know. But I'm pretty confident that we're going to keep places of worship in the coming days.

Okay, now in chapter three, the warning, the if, the condition was the last thing. Now, it's right up at the front. As for you, if you will walk before me as David your father walked, and this is ESV, it says with integrity of heart, with a whole heart.

The word that's used is that Hebrew word we've talked about a little bit before. It is the word, in this case, tom. It's the Hebrew word tom, and it means, again, whole, complete, total.

This is the word that's used for the sacrificial lamb. The lamb you offer has to be tom, a whole lamb, just exactly what a lamb ought to be. So, if you walk before me with your heart whole, complete, as David walked.

If you will walk before me as David your father walked, with a whole heart and uprightly. Again, a fascinating word, a word that means, basically, pretty close to the English, straight up and down. I'm going to go off to the side somewhere.

But straight up and down for him. So, if you'll do that, doing according to all that I've commanded, keeping my statutes and my rules, then, then, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, you shall not black a man on the throne of Israel. Now I find that interesting. We're at least 15 years into his reign.

God is saying, if you do this, I will establish you, hmm, hmm. Now, I do not want to be unkind or speak out of turn, but this is not internal security. Now I gave you, I gave you the throne.

I gave you this reign that you've been enjoying. But I want to tell you, there are conditions. There are conditions.

It's a walk, and if you choose to walk into the ditch, there's not much I can do for you. Now I want to say again—I've said it before, I'll say it again—I don't believe in eternal insecurity. I don't believe we have a God who's waiting for just one misstep to kick us off the edge, not on your life.

On the other hand, it is a walk, and if I take my hand out of God's hand and say, leave me alone, he will. So, if you'll do that, I'll establish your royal throne over Israel forever. But, if you turn aside from following me, there it is, turn aside.

And again, the Hebrew word here is so interesting. I know you're not interested, but I am. The Hebrew word is *sur*, which means to turn aside.

It also means to take away. This is what you do to an idol. You turn it aside, and you take it away.

This is what happens in circumcision. The first thing is to turn it aside, take it away. So, it's more than, as I said, it's more than just, oh, diverging a little bit.

It's saying, no, I don't want to walk that way anymore. I'm going to walk that way. Do not keep my statutes that I've set before you.

But, now what is it to turn aside, according to the verse here? Do what? Turn aside for following and keeping the commandments. That's sort of the negative. Now, what's the positive of turning aside? The next thing is to serve other gods.

Serve other gods. There it is. There's the bottom line.

It's not merely, not merely that your heart grows cool and your devotional life is not quite as exciting as it once was. No, it's turning aside and putting my faith in something other than Yahweh, the one God. Putting my faith in pleasure.

Putting my faith in, well, putting my faith in security. All those gods, we've taken the faces off of them, but they're still the gods. Whom am I serving? Is my hand firmly in His hand? And, of course, all the way through, in English, it's a nice wordplay.

In Hebrew, it's not connected at all. But all the way through, idolatry is connected to adultery. Where does adultery begin? It begins when I start flirting with my secretary.

It begins, oh, so immeasurably, until one day. One day. We've all heard the most recent of the megachurch pastors who have fallen.

How did it start? With an adulterous mind, with an adulterous heart. How does idolatry start? It starts when I begin flirting with comfort or pleasure or security or fame. Then, I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given you and the house that I have sanctified for my name.

I will cast out of my sight. And Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. This house will become a heap of ruins.

Everyone passing by will be astonished at this and say, why has the Lord done this to this land and to this house? Then they'll say, because they abandoned the Lord, their God. The word that's used here is the same word for divorce. They abandoned the Lord, their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them.

Therefore, the Lord has brought all this disaster on them. Warning, heavy warning. We have the feeling again, or I have the feeling in chapter three, as I say, it's the dawn, it's the morning.

God has all these wonderful possibilities before Solomon. And he says, yes, yes, let me encourage you. Let me send you out with the confidence that I've not only given you what you've asked for, I'm going to give you what you didn't ask for.

But now, Solomon is treading on the edge of a cliff. God is saying I'm still really fairly jet-packed. Solomon, don't do it, don't do it, don't do it.

Now, what are the conditions for blessing the temple and the Davidic dynasty? What's number one? Walking with integrity, walking with a whole heart. A pattern of life. And I just, I want to stress again, idolatry begins when our heart begins to swerve away for our one true love.

Idolatry begins when we allow our hearts to begin to swerve away. God, God, God, God, God, God, God, God, God. All right, what else? Now, how do I know I'm walking with a whole heart? Obedience, yes.

Don't become a shoplifter. These days, that's a terrific, terrific temptation, right? Hey, but Walmart writes it into their budget. Is it hurting? Here is my heart holding obedience.

If he says it's stealing, it's stealing. There it is, isn't that simple? There it comes, yes, yes. And you see, you see the progression.

There are the conditions. If you meet these conditions, this house will be my house forever. So, what is God's attitude toward the temple? What does He say? What's His attitude? Conditional, it's conditional, mm-hmm, mm-hmm, precisely.

Well, no, no, wait a minute. No, it's been, it's been medicated. God has sanctified it, so, therefore, it's inviolate.

It's not, isn't it? No, no, this is not a magic place. This is not a place that, because we've done certain rituals and said certain words, is, therefore, automatically and forever a holy place. What makes it holy? His presence, His presence.

And His presence is conditional. If we don't meet the conditions, He doesn't care a lick about that place. That's not Hebrew.

Which prophet saw Him leave, saw the presence? Ezekiel, Ezekiel, yes, yes. That terrifying picture of the Holy Spirit rising from the holy place, going out to the threshold. You're a good man, I don't feel like dancing.

Rising from the threshold, going out to the gate, pausing the gate, on out to the Mount of Olives, pausing, so reluctantly leaving, but He's leaving. So, no, this is not some sort of a magically holy place now. It is only holy because God is there.

And God will only be there if His people are walking with whole hearts, gladly following His rules, and keeping themselves for Him alone. Again, a wedding ceremony. Keep thee only unto her as long as you both shall live.

So, God says, yes, I've chosen this place for my name, and my heart and my eyes will be on it forever. Unless you turn aside to other dogs and then tear it down, burn it down, trash it. So again, what we see here is typical, right through the Bible.

Does He care about true, pure sacrifices? Yes, He does. He commands them unless we try to do them magically and say because I've made these sacrifices. Therefore you have to forgive me. And He says, I never told you to give me sacrifices.

Yes, you did, I told you to give me your heart. And the sacrifices are pleasing to me if they represent your heart. Now, the temple, the gorgeous place of worship of me, represents me and my character. I love it unless it doesn't represent your character.

And then I care not at all. Okay, the very temple could become an idol. Oh, absolutely, the temple could become an idol, and it did, it did, yes, yes.

Given who we humans are, virtually anything could become an idol. We're really good at reducing God to our size. Yes, yes.

Okay, is there anything more you want to say there before we move on to verse 10 and following? Yes. I'm reminded of what Samuel told Saul when he disobeyed. He said, I brought you a sacrifice, and he said, obedience, brethren, brethren.

Yes, yes, yes, the sin of disobedience is idolatry. Yes, yes, absolutely, absolutely. And it is that that interesting connection that is profoundly biblical.

paganism says the symbol is the thing. Do something to the symbol, and you've done something to the thing. That's how voodoo operates.

Make a symbol of Oswalt, stab it in the stomach with a hat pin, Oswalt has the stomachache. That's paganism. Greek philosophy says the symbol has no connection to the thing.

It's just a symbol. Now, this relates to theories about the Lord's suffering. It is the body of blood.

You say, are you daring to say that's pagan? Yeah, I am. On the other hand, no, there's no connection between that juice and bread and the body of blood of Jesus Christ. The Bible over and over again says there is a connection.

You can't just drive a wedge between the two. There's something mysterious going on. So, you sacrifice the lamb.

The Greek says that has nothing to do with forgiveness. The pagan says, that makes you forgiven, regardless of your heart. The Bible says, yes, that is God's invocation and description, God's evidence of a deeper reality.

Over and over again, you see that thing happening. The pagan approach, the Greek approach, and the bizarre biblical approach. Okay.

Now, I don't know whether any of you did your homework or not, but I ask you to look at 10 through 28, which, on the surface, and I'm not sure whether Jenny caught my typo or not, I said on the surface, it looks somewhat miscellaneous. I meant, on the surface, they seem somewhat miscellaneous. So, here they are.

In verses 10 to 14, Solomon is paying off Hiram. Remember Hiram sold him the lumber for the temple, gave him a craftsman to do it, and now Solomon is paying him off and he's giving him 20 villages from the territory of the tribe of Asher. And Hiram doesn't like him.

Now, the author doesn't tell us, this is a promised land, but it is. Then, we're told about the buildings that Solomon has created using forced labor. The Lord's temple, his own palace, the terraces.

Nobody quite knows what that is a reference to. The Hebrew is the millo, M-I-L-L-O, and nobody's quite sure what that's referring to. Archeologically, they've discovered on the east side of the old city a series of, it's a stepped structure.

It looks like it's an abutment, a retaining wall, probably, for the palace above it. So, that's where this terrace comes from, is that that's probably what it is. It's a massive structure.

That's probably the terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, which is way up in the north, just northeast, excuse me, northwest of the Sea of Galilee, a major city on the great coast road headed down toward Egypt. Hazor, then Megiddo, and I ought to give you a cartographic demonstration here, or if I were faster on the draw, I would have it on the PowerPoint, but I don't. The coast road coming from Damascus up here down to Hazor here, then down through the hills to the valley of Jezreel, across the valley, and there are three passes through this, the Mount Carmel Ridge, Mount Carmel is out there.

There are three passes. The best one is guarded by the city of Megiddo. When you walk there, you have the feeling that the ground will ooze blood. This is the choke point on this great highway.

Every caravan had to go through that narrow pass past the city of Megiddo, and it has been fought over and fought over and fought over as long as human beings have existed. It is well known in the Bible, in the Bible, hill is par. Now, if you're a Greek, you don't say this barbaric syllable here, Armageddon, the on is a Greek case ending.

The book of Revelation tells us that the last battle will be fought at that place. The main Israeli air base is located right here with atomic weapons. Hazor, Megiddo, and down here is the fortress of Gezer, which we're told the pharaoh captured, slaughtered all the inhabitants, and gave it to his daughter as a wedding present.

Again, overlooking this highway, also overlooking the main road up into the hill country, very, very powerful fortress. So yeah, he used the conscripted labor to build his palace, the terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. He built up lower Beth-haran, that's right here on this road up into the highlands, Baaloth and Tadmor in the desert.

Tadmor is the oasis of Palmyra, way up here. Baaloth, probably in the south here somewhere, we don't know for certain, but he's fortifying everything, as well as his store cities and the towns for his chariots and for his horses. Whatever he desired to build, in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and throughout all the territory he ruled.

My, how did he do that? He did it with slave labor. Now, as I mentioned in the introduction, it appears that the Israelites mentioned in chapter five worked for three months and then went back home again. They weren't actually slaves, and they were forced labor.

But the Canaanites that were left behind were enslaved. So, with forced labor from his own people and slave labor, he accomplished this tremendous, tremendous building enterprise. I'm sorry, I'm still thinking about Armageddon.



Now, is the AR just mimicking the Hebrew? Exactly. Oh, so it's in Greek. If you want to say an H, you put it's called rough breathing there.

So, you would say Har-mageddon. And Har is Hebrew for hill or mountain. And so they weren't seeing it as, it doesn't mean, Har doesn't mean mountain in Greek.

As far as the Greeks are concerned, this whole thing just becomes a name. Oh, okay. The Hebrews would say the last battle is going to be on the mountain of Megiddo.

And the Greeks are going to say it's going to be at Armageddon. Yeah. Then the little phrase, the little verse, after Pharaoh's daughter had come up from the city of David to the place Solomon had built for her, he constructed the terraces.

Kind of a little parenthesis here. Then, three times a year, he fulfilled the temple obligations. Very religious guy.

He then entered into a very lucrative shipping partnership with Hiram. Hiram, again, remember, is a Phoenician. The Phoenicians are sailors.

By this time, they're sailing all over the Mediterranean, all the way out to Gibraltar. In fact, 200 years after this, we're told that the Pharaoh paid for a Phoenician circumnavigation of Africa. 600 BC, the Phoenicians sailed all the way around Africa.

So, here we are. Now, my question was, okay, fairly miscellaneous. Do you see any common thread here? Is there anything that might tie them together, or is it just a list? And I don't want to push this too hard.

Maybe it is just a list. But, do you see anything that might tie it all together? It seems like he's trying to make sure that he's secure. He just broke all of the requirements that were listed in Deuteronomy 17 about the law of the place.

Yes, he's broken the requirements of Deuteronomy 17. We'll get there in a few minutes. But, yes, yes, there's nothing unique.

It's like any other king. He's like any other king. He's doing what kings do.

Making deals with his neighbor. Yes? It seems to me like, as he illustrates it again, little by little, he's just stepping away from God. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Inch by inch by inch, how does adultery begin? How does idolatry begin? Inch by inch by inch. So, as Mike says, he's acting the part of a king. Not a king whose heart is first.

What does God want? Not first, what will please God? Oh, there's religion in here. Three times a year, the great feasts. Passover, first fruits, tabernacles.

Saul was very religious, too. To be religious is not necessarily to be godly. So, I think it's kind of interesting that, again, we're bookended here with Hiram.

This Phoenician king that David was friends with, but Solomon is in an alliance with. I think it's also interesting, and again, I simply say interesting, that right before his fulfilling the temple obligations, he moved Pharaoh's daughter into the palace. Or maybe right after moving Pharaoh's daughter into the palace, fulfilling temple obligations.

Oh God, do I use my religion to cover up flirting with paganism? So, we come then to chapter 10. And I want to call your attention. I don't think we need to spend a lot of time on this chapter, but I want to call your attention to the Queen of Sheba's words in 6, 7, 8, and 9. She said to the king, and by the way, as I say in the introduction, this was probably a trade mission. Her business is frankincense.

Frankincense only grows down there at the extreme southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. And it was the preferred incense all over the ancient Near East for some reason or another. So, she had a monopoly, but she had to ship it.

And it appears that Damascus was the main trans-shipping point. So, her trade would come up to the port of Eilat down here, and then a couple of options. It's going to come up here or out this way to the Philistine cities.

Or it's going to come up the King's Highway this way and out to Damascus. Along the way, it would go through Bethshan and on out to the port of Akko. Akko is here.

This is not a good port because the northwest storms blow right into it. Akko, on the other hand, has a protected area, not very large, but a protected area there where ships could be protected from that storm. So, out to Akko.

And guess who has a stranglehold right on all of this? Solomon. So, her monopoly doesn't do her a lot of good unless she can make a trade deal. So, almost certainly, that's what this is about.

She isn't just coming on a pleasure trip to meet this wise guy. So, the report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. I did not believe these things till I came and saw with my own eyes.

Indeed, not even half has been told me. In wisdom and wealth, you have far exceeded the report I heard. How happy your people must be.

How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom. Now, verse nine. Praise be to Yahweh, your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel.

Because of Yahweh's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king to maintain justice and righteousness. What has she learned from this visit? What's she saying? Congratulations. Yes, yes.

The reason this is happening is because of your God, Yahweh. Yahweh has put you on the throne of Israel. Because of the Lord's eternal love, he has made you king.

Wow. No, no, it's because Solomon is so smart. It's because Solomon is so industrious.

No, she's smarter than that. It's too far-stretched to apply that to our own nation to say that we've been so blessed not because of our might, because of our wisdom, but because of God. Not at all.

Not at all. It's exactly it. I mean, you could, and I dare not get off on it, but you can go down the list of the features of this continent, of the way in which immigration has worked, the mix of peoples and cultures, and intelligence.

It's just, it's mind-boggling. So, the question is, if this one woman figured it out, what might have been the possible influence of this nation on the world if Solomon had been faithful? She figured it out. How many, how many other nations might have figured it out, too? But no, this nation's going to fall apart in about 20 years.

You know, I just thought that possibly she went through the back door, and that is, when you realize God, you realize there's no man ever if he hadn't got it. And so, in essence, she recognized some of Solomon's weaknesses, his fallibility, and I think she gave credit to God because she didn't get it. Yeah, I think you're very likely correct.

That this is, I didn't hear half of what is really the situation here. Well, this couldn't happen merely by human power and authority. There's got to be a better explanation than that.

Well, I think the same applies to us. Why in the world has the United States been in such a position as it has? It's God. God's grace, the umbrella of His care, which we are industrially shooting full of holes.

How long, oh Lord, how long? So, that whole Queen of Sheba thing strikes me. This is a pagan woman. This is a woman who, in Arabia, they worshiped, especially there, they worshiped the stars.

Stand out in Arabia on a starry night, and you're just blown away. But she says, no, no, it's this I am God of Israel who has done this for you, and His love for you is eternal. She got it.

She got it. How many more could have gotten it? Somebody over here had a hand up. That scared me away.

Okay, all right. All right, in verses 14 through 25, we have this incredible description of Solomon's wealth. It just goes on and on and on.

The amount of gold that he brought in every year, his huge throne. Verse 21, his goblets were gold. All the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold.

Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value. Once again, I find myself asking, why is the author telling us this? Is he telling us this to praise Solomon? Could be, could be. But in the context, I wonder.

One of the things that I have observed in my short, misspent life is that it's very difficult to get God, once He's started, to stop blessing you, and that is deadly. Some of you have heard me talk about this before, but when I was eight years old, I should back up one step and say my dad enjoyed going to revival meetings, and he'd go to revival meetings all over the country and take me, his kid, along with him. When I was eight years old, there was a citywide crusade in Mansfield, Ohio.

It was held in the auditorium of junior high, and the preacher was a young man named Jack Schuller. He was spellbinding. I just, as an eight-year-old kid, was just, couldn't take my eyes off him.

He walked back and forth across that stage. He didn't have a wireless mic, he had a wired mic, and so he was whipping the wire behind him as he walked. Incredible.

Jack Schuller, Charles Templeton, and Billy Graham were the three bright, young preacher stars in the late 40s and early 50s. Charles Templeton went to Princeton Theological Seminary and lost his faith. Jack Schuller was a preacher for the rest of his life, but more and more obscure.

I asked Dennis Kinlaw about it once. Because Jack Schuller said, everybody knows I'm a better preacher than Billy Graham, and he was. I asked Dennis about it.

He said, oh, Jack always preached to two audiences, that one and this one. He walked through life with a mirror in his hand. Well, God used him.

God used him in pretty amazing ways, not in the huge international stage that Billy Graham was given, but still in church after church, in citywide revival after citywide revival. When he preached, the altars were full, but he was flirting with alcohol and with women, and he died in Portland, Oregon, just having completed a week-long revival. He was found dead in a motel room of a combination of drugs and alcohol.

The prostitute with whom he had spent the night was gone. See, God kept on blessing him, even when he was sinking farther and farther into sin. And he could kid himself that, well, it's not so bad, because God is still blessing me.

I think that's what we see here in Saul. God is not a touchy lover. God will keep giving and giving and giving in the desperate hope that somehow I'll come to my senses and get out of the ditch and back into his arms.

But if you're not willing to get out of the ditch, you can kid yourself that, well, God's blessing, it must be all right. No, it's not. No, it's not.

So, I wonder, I wonder if that's the picture we have here of God's incredible grace, of his incredible continuing blessing even while he's drifting farther and farther away. God have mercy, God have mercy. So, what is the Bible's attitude toward wealth? And I gave you a whole list of references there.

On the one hand, it is positive. So, for instance, just one example, Proverbs 22.4, humility is the fear of the Lord. Its wages are riches and honor and life.

Live a life where you know you're not number one. Live a life where your greatest fear is displeasing God, and stand back, stand back. I think that's where you see Solomon beginning in chapter three, humility and the fear of the Lord.

So, wisdom or riches come from God. If you have riches, they're a gift from God. A result of fearing the Lord, of humility, of wisdom.

It's also equivocal. The Bible is equivocal about wealth because wealth can lead to pride. Well, look what I do.

You poor klutzes, you could be as rich as I am. You'd drive a large. To trust in wealth rather than God and to neglect righteousness and the knowledge of God.

Again, one example is 1 Timothy chapter six, verses 17 and 18. Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, to be generous and willing to share.

So, if you've got money, be careful. Be careful, it could trip you up. And then it is profoundly negative.

This is Psalm 52, seven. Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others. How'd you get rich? By walking on other people's land.

These others also cover that. So, the Bible, if you've got wealth, it came from God. If you live the right kind of life, you may very well receive wealth from him.

But be careful. It can trap you. In fact, most of the wealth was crooked. And there will be destruction for such persons indeed.

I always think that Isaiah 53 is so interesting. He was buried with the rich, although he had done no wrong. Ooh.

Okay. That's adding insult to injury. He couldn't even be buried with the poor whom he loved.

Instead, he's buried with the wicked rich. So, we come to the end of the chapter. Here it is.

Here is the king's code of behavior from Deuteronomy chapter 17. You may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you.

You may not put a foreigner over you who is not your brother. Only, here it comes, he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses. Since the Lord has said to you, you shall never return that way again.

He shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away. Nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold. Go back to 1 Kings nine.

Solomon, this is 26. Solomon accumulated chariots and horses. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also within Jerusalem.

The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the fields. Solomon's horses, are you ready for this? They were imported from Egypt and from Kuwait, Sicilia, where Paul was Tarsus of Sicily. The royal merchants purchased them from Kuwait at the current price.

They imported a chariot from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver and a horse for 150. They exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans. He was in the Arameans, that is, and then the 11th one.

King Solomon, love him for three strikes. And you're out. Do not acquire many horses for himself, 12,000, or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses.

He shall not acquire many wives for himself, nor shall he acquire for himself excesses of his own, Solomon. How are the mighty far? And one last thought. The book of Revelation says it well.

There is a crown of life for those who are faithful unto God grant that that may be the case for everyone. Faithful unto death. Because you see, there are no trophies given out for good starts.

There are no records kept. Well, I suppose somebody does. But there are no records kept of who scored the most touchdowns in the first quarter and who scored the most touchdowns at the end. Be thou faithful.

Thank you, Father. Thank you, that you are for us.

Thank you that your blessings go on and on and on far beyond our deserving. Help us, Lord, to remember and know that in the end, it's not our obedience that earns your blessing. Help us to know that your blessing is the byproduct of walking with you.

Help us, Lord. Thank you for these brothers and sisters and their willingness to give up anything to gather around your word. I pray God, your rich blessing on every one of us.

Grant, O Lord, that we may be determined to walk before you with a whole heart abiding by your statutes and decrees worshiping you alone. Help us, Lord. Thank you. In your name, amen.