

Dr. Elaine Phillips, OT History, Lit., and Theology, Lecture 23

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Ok, well it's time to start. It looks like we're suffering from the: It's a rainy day, it's Friday, post –exam syndrome. Since you are the faithful, at least you are a majority, so we've got that much, but it's a small majority. I've said this before and I'll say it again: "Encourage your brothers and sisters, be their keepers so that indeed they are here for class. It is very interesting when the exam shows up and there are faces that I haven't seen before except for the previous exam.

At any rate, that's their problem. Friday papers, are due a week from Friday, is that right? If you've got questions about the paper, now is the time to be asking them. Not right now, but this week as opposed to Thursday night. Let me just say this and I know I've said this before but I'll say it again: "A one page paper means that you work really, really hard at it, because it starts out as a four or a five page paper and then it gets boiled down and refined so that every word on that one page has a lot of punch behind it." So don't think, "Oh one page, I can just dash that off in ten minutes." It doesn't work that way. And I'll be looking at your preliminary work as well so if you look through the assignment, you know there's a fair amount of preliminary work that you need to do. I grade on that as well on as on that final one page project. So do put some effort into this; I think you'll find it quite an encouraging thing to do. Don't ask if you can turn in a late paper, you have a little bit of grace from 9 until 5 on that day. So anything beyond that time and since you've had the assignment since the beginning of the term, I really honestly won't accept that. I hate to be such an ogre but that's kind of the way things go. Those of you doing extra credit, its due Monday. Don't ask me for an extension on that either.

You can see the exams statistics here. Here is just an announcement/question: (student makes an announcement/ question). I would encourage you, especially if things are problematic when you come to exams and you're really struggling to take advantage of the review sessions, they are eminently helpful, and both Carrie and Matt have good

way of making content accessible. Especially in those frantic hours before the exam. But I would encourage you to do it every week as well. Any questions, comments, before me move on? Carrie is going to put your exams back in your boxes later on today, but if you've checked your Blackboard, then you already know what your grade is, and kind of map that out and you can also look at the exam keys there.

Well we need to sing. [They sing.] God is good and his mercy is everlasting.

Father, we do thank you that you have indeed called us to be your children that we have on a daily bases access to you through the blood of Jesus, coming very much into your presence, and into your throne room, bringing the things that we want to thank you for, and also our burdens before you, so we're grateful. Lord we're thankful to be here, to be able to study together, to have heat and light; to have sufficient food, and have security. Father, we do pray for those who don't have these things we just so often take for granted. In your mercy, please meet the needs of your people. Father, we would pray that you would help us today as we study. May our study truly be an act of worship. Make our minds keen and our hearts burning with love for you and with desire for your presence. So we pray these things in Christ's name, with thanksgiving. Amen.

By the way I should have prayed for this as well, but I'll just get it on your prayer radar screen. Now in northern Minnesota, have you been following up in the news there lately? The whole northern Minnesota area and eastern North Dakota is a disaster area right now because they are having flood waters today and tomorrow that they have not experienced for over 100 years, and it's messy business. I've spent my high school days, when spring came along, you usually work sand bagging, because I lived in a town where a river kind of went through like this, so I know what they're going through. But I encourage you to pray for these folks because many of them are up for losing their homes, their livelihoods; whole towns are being threatened by flood waters well over threatening stage and are now breaking through dikes as well. So these are difficult times for these folks. I know people suffer around the world, I just have that connection and I know that there are some Minnesotans who live on campus as well. So just put that on your prayer radar screen.

We're going to do a little bit of review as we talk about Solomon, and Solomon's consolidating the kingdom. We have a united monarchy once David reaches the end of his reign, but it's one that has some fractures and those fractures are going to reappear at the end of Solomon's reign. But Solomon himself does indeed consolidate the empire in ways that we're going to talk about. I probably should say kingdom, I probably shouldn't say empire. We need to review a little bit however because we have a little bit of time in between a review question or perhaps I should say 2 review questions. Let's see if we can, given the fact that you have done all this for the exam. I'll reconstruct this. How did David recreate political and religious unity in his kingdom? (Student answers question). Excellent! He's moving the capital to a place that's going to be a little bit more appealing to those northern tribes and especially the tribe Benjamin and the former city of Jebus now, Jerusalem. He moves the ark there so he got all of those religious symbols in the same place. I shouldn't say all; you've got the ark there but we've still got that Tent of Meeting out in Gibeon. We're going to talk about that today. And then you're absolutely right; David expands the boundaries of the kingdom considerably as well.

Next question, second question, last question: what event prepared for the future building of the temple? Particularly in terms of its location? (Student answers question). Absolutely, good! David has, after that sin of numbering the people and experiencing the plague and the angel of the Lord and the devastation, David, in gratitude to God wants that plague stopped buys this threshing floor of Araunah it's in the area of Mt. Moriah as we learned from 2 Chronicles chapter 3. On that particular location, he's going to offer sacrifices. Of course, as we said on Monday, that's what lays the ground work for the building of the temple. So we're all set now for another major enterprise. And that does indeed bring us to Solomon.

What's Solomon best known for? And by the way, if you need a way to remember this and you can thank one of my students about 15 years ago, he suggested this, and I just pass it along every class. This is not originally with me. Think of 4 "W's". Four "W's". (Student answers). Ok, that's good. Wisdom and women, and women are better because we don't only want to say wives because there is a bunch of other women in

there as well. So wisdom and women. (Student answers). Wealth and worship! That's it: wisdom, women, wealth and worship. Some of these have both a good side and a bad side to them as we're going to see as we make our way along.

(Student answers). Yes, that is a great question: what is the difference between a concubine and a wife? A wife is someone who is betrothed and actually serves in that capacity and Solomon's wives are often there because he has made political alliances. You see the example of that with Pharaoh's daughter which we're going to talk about a little bit later on. So there is a stature associated with the position of a wife that is not what a concubine would enjoy. The Hebrew word for concubine is with one that people have there *pilegesh*, or something like that. But there is all sorts of stuff being written on it, in terms of what exactly it meant although it's a little bit uncertain. I believe that there is a different stature and in the cases of the kings, you've got, often times these political alliances being made. (Student answers). That's a good question! "Is there ever any interchange between these terms?" And one of the confusions is that the Hebrew word for "wife" is also the Hebrew word for "woman." And so you've got a concubine who is a woman and falls into that category who's then related to this person. So, there's going to be some fuzzy boundaries, but the questions are good ones. The little bit of study I have done on this term "concubine" leaves me having to say to you; I honestly don't know all the answers to what is part and parcel about that. Good questions; any other questions.

If I don't think of it later on please ask me, about this business of having so many women as wives. I've eluded to the issues already in terms of the political issues but when we start talking about Deuteronomy 17, and what the kings weren't supposed to do; we should be coming back to that.

Here's another question for you: Do you remember sources, like 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings are in one sort of a block and unit and 1 and 2 Chronicles are later and they have a different emphasis. As for reading for today, what difference did you see between 1 King's materials and what you read in Chronicles? (Student answers). Yes, you don't see that whole thing at the end of Solomon's reign, about his idolatry do you? It's not in

Chronicles, it's in 1 Kings 11, but we're not going to see it in Chronicles. That's one of the bookends, think of the other bookend. How about the beginning of Solomon's reign or the things that lead up to it? In Chronicles, did you read anything about Adonijah, and that whole business in terms of the frustrations and the tension and the attempts to get the kingdom? It wasn't there or was it? Ok, Solomon just becomes king in Chronicles; that's not the case in Kings. You have Adonijah; you have him setting himself up as king, but we'll talk about that in a minute. So, just keep our antennas up for those differences. That's what make the reading so interesting; among many other things.

Alright, shall we carry on. As I've often said, I want you to be aware of the major events that unfold as; in this case, Solomon gets established as king. Know the names, know the people, know how this happens. We'll zero in on a couple of points but obviously we can't talk about all of them.

As David reaches the end of his life, as an old person, he can't keep warm. Abishag, a young woman is brought in basically just to keep him warm. Now why is this significant later on in the narrative? Why do we even take those first four verses of 1 Kings to talking about keeping king David warm? And then they go on to this whole thing with Adonijah and he's setting himself up to be king, and you have those first 4 verses, (Student reads). Yes, and it's actually going to be asked, Solomon. Adonijah, once he's been, for all intents and purposes, deposed from his presumed kingship, and then he requests to have Abishag. Why is that a political statement perhaps? Where have we seen that maneuver before? Taking somebody's concubine? (Student answers). Yes, Absalom, made a really digesting political statement, didn't he, when he sleeps with David's concubines, in full daylight, where everybody can watch it happen. And so it's making a statement: what belonged to my father is mine. If Adonijah does it, what belonged to David in his old age, Abishag is Adonijah's, then he is making inroads and it is Solomon's detriment to have that kind of thing going on and his not doing something about it. And we even saw it all the way back as far as Reuben. You know that was considered an absolute heinous thing for Reuben to sleep with Bilhah, his father's concubine and the handmaid of one of his wives. So that's the first thing. Well

Adonijah indeed schemes to become king. He does it in a very interesting way. It's fascinating to find out that yet again that if we read very carefully, that David is not really the best of fathers. Because it says he never corrected Adonijah. Adonijah was spoiled. Just as Absalom was spoiled. And we see mirroring things going on here. And so David really never sets it right.

Adonijah does what he wants to do and he rounds up two very important people to come over to his side. You know who they are: Abiathar; and what role does he play? He's the priest who has actually been with David all along, you remember he's the one that came and brought the ephod and so forth so we've got a very key figure. So here Adonijah is figuring out, he's got Abiathar now on his side. Zadok is going to be the one that stays with David. (Student asks question). Yes, he also gets Joab on his side, and of course Joab has a long history. And Adonijah probably sees this as somebody who will successfully any wholly command and any armies if he needs to have them, but David has Benaiah who we also heard, if we're reading Chronicles carefully, is a pretty important person as well.

Adonijah sets himself up at a place called En-Rogel, south end of the city if David, but we have in the meantime Nathan and Bathsheba coming to David and saying, are you aware of what's going on? And of course, then we find out that not only has David chosen Solomon, and by the way, Adonijah was the next in line. Amnon is gone; we don't know what happened to Kileah he's the second born. Absalom's gone; Adonijah is the fourth born so he is the next in line.

And Solomon is the one that's going to be king and that's because, if we back up to 1 Chronicles 28:5, David says, "of all my sons and the Lord has given me many, He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on a throne over the kingdom of Israel." And David is well aware of that and when this thing comes through the crisis, it's not only David's choice. David is insisting, suggesting, stating, and declaring that it's the Lord's choice, that it will be Solomon who will be picked. So Solomon and David set up the coronation of Solomon himself, and some very symbolic thing happens, we're going to look at a map in a moment. And David is going to have this done at the Gihon Spring which is the

source of water for Jerusalem. Lots of water pumping out of that and there are a lot of interesting levels of symbolism. Solomon is also going to be riding on David's mule. And that's fairly significant too. So those statements are being made as a part of the whole coronation ceremony.

In the meantime, we have David, who has been told by Nathan who's reporting from the Lord's word of course, David has been told that he's not going to build the temple. But he doesn't just sit back, and if you take some time to read through these chapters, 1 Chronicles 28 and 29, David very carefully is preparing to build the temple so that Solomon doesn't have to start from ground zero without any experience. In fact, if you read it really carefully, you see that the Holy Spirit has given David the plan for the temple. Fascinating passage; the Spirit has given him the sense of what this temple is going to be like and the plan for it, and then he follows through and as we're going to look at in a moment, its reflective in some ways as the tabernacle did in some ways as a shadow or an semblance or a very poor copy of the heavenly realms themselves. More on that in a minute.

Well then we need to move on, or back perhaps, on back to 1 Kings. I'd like you to have your text in front of you as we see what it is that David tells Solomon to do. This is in chapter 2 and it gives him some very specific advice. First of all, verse 3: be obedient. The text says: "observe what the Lord your God requires, walk in his ways, keep his decrees and commands and laws and requirements as written in Torah of Moses." So, a declaration; Solomon is to be obedient. And then it goes on and says you're supposed to build the temple as well, that's a little bit later on, and then finally the things we want to really note: take care of some unfinished business, that's what I've called it here.

David realizes that he's about to die and there are some interpersonal justice issues that need to be addressed and so let's look at them. First of all, 1 Kings 2:5, "you know how bad Joab is, he's shed an awful lot of blood" verse 6, "deal with him according to your wisdom but don't let his gray hair go down to Sheol in peace." Joab's got blood on his hands. He's gotten away with a lot, let's put it that way. And David is saying to

Solomon; you need to deal with Joab. His time has come.

The second thing lest we think that David is sort of out on vendettas here, in verse 7 he says, “show kindness to the sons of Barzillai;” it’s his sons that are going to be in the generation that David will show kindness too. “Show kindness to sons of Barzillai of Gilead; let them be among those that eat at your table. They were the ones who stood by me behind me and if you remember they were the ones that had to flee when Absalom was taking over.” Barzillai shows him hospitality, so David instructs Solomon to do precisely the same kind of thing: so there is a nice measure for measure.

And then finally, in verse 8, you still have this guy named Shimei the one who cursed David as he was leaving in that situation and he tells Solomon deal with him, you’re a man of wisdom he says again in verse 9. “You will know what to do with him. Bring his gray head down to Sheol in blood.” Now Solomon very graciously gives these two people, Joab and Shimei, chances that they abuse those concerns.

(Student asks question). That’s a really good question I’m going to answer it way too briefly. The Hebrew word itself, Sheol, shows up in both and prose contexts, such as this one, and poetic contexts. In the Hebrew bible. In most of the prose contexts it seems to be pretty much just a parable to the grave. In other words: dying; even though there’s another word for grave it seems to be that, because we have people who like Jacob, mention going to Sheol. And we don’t really want to think of him as being something that’s commensurable with hell. Having said that, in the poetic passages, you have it used to represent grave, but there is a few other places where it seems like its talking about something else in Isaiah chapter 14 is one of those key places where you have spirits of the dead who are restless in Sheol and it doesn’t sound like it’s a very nice place to be it shows up in the book of Job, too. That’s my short answer. Great question! I think David is simply saying here, let him die.

Adonijah, as a result of this particular request that he makes for Abishag that is transgressing into very significant territory. By the way let me just back up a bit. When David and Bathsheba are having this interaction over in 1:21, they’re talking about what’s forth coming and she says to David, “you need to do something about this

otherwise as soon as you, [she calls him, my lord the king,] is laid to rest with his fathers, I and my son Solomon will be treated as criminals” which means that Adonijah would get rid of Solomon and probably everyone else too that posed any kind of potential threat to Adonijah’s kingdom. We’re going to see this as the historical books unfold. That when somebody becomes king, and the circumstances are not very nice or good, that somebody will often wipe out all the opposition sweeping him out of the ways with a broom. And that is what Bathsheba is terribly afraid that Adonijah would do to Solomon and it probably would have happened. So for Solomon to actually give Adonijah a bit of a chance, and Adonijah actually transgresses this, by saying give me Abishag, you could see how what’s all beginning to unfold. Well, that moves us back to Solomon’s prayer for wisdom, and notice by the way that Solomon’s already wise. David says to him, you are a man of wisdom. Solomon’s had enough brains to know that he needs a whole lot more wisdom. And notice what he says in chapter 3. He goes to Gibeon where they’re sacrificing, where the tabernacle seems to have been at that point and he says verse 9, “LORD give your servant a heart that hears.” I’ve translated the NIV’s “discerning heart,” more literally, it’s “a heart that hears.” And kind of bound up in that hearing is obeying. The Hebrew word for “hear” often has connotations of obedience as well. “Give your servant an obedient heart to govern your people to distinguish between what is right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people?” Well, Solomon knows to ask for wisdom; he focuses his request in a particular area, and it’s that area of: “Help! I don’t know how to govern this people.” And we’re going to see that in that area, he’s really very smart. In fact, the very next section of chapter 3 gives us a test case to illustrate how wise Solomon is, the two women come to him, and the child is dead and so forth. You see, Solomon’s wisdom, in terms of governments there and in terms of making judicial decisions. Where he’s not so wise seems his prayer didn’t necessarily cover his personal life because he makes some dismal choices in that way. We’re going to be looking at that a little bit later on, in terms of mercy in governing his people, is one that God in his mercy and grace answers and also as the LORD says will give him the wealth and the security and all those good things that go along with that.

Well this gets us too what I simplistically labeled geopolitics because we learn some things about what happens with Solomon but we need to keep in mind what Deuteronomy 17 said about the Kings. Does anybody remember some of the key issues that show up in that particular passage? I'll read it in a minute. (Students answer). The king needs to write himself a copy of the law and needs to have it in a place where he's going to read it. What else is the king responsible to do or not do? (Student answers). Yeah, let me do that one. "Not many wives for himself lest his heart turn away." If you read the material for today, you know that Solomon has really transgressed that. Right? And we learn that gold and silver; there is so much of it and you don't count it anymore; in Solomon's reign there's lots of wealth. And they're not supposed to acquire horses. Solomon does that too and he tells where some of them and the chariots come from. So Solomon is pushing the edge in some of this stuff. Of course, I think we can read between the lines, and guess what? He's becoming powerful.

We're going to look at a map to show the extent of his kingdom. Political alliances need to be made. Women were political capital whether we like it or not. And so Solomon will cement his political relationships by getting wives from these various "small kingdoms." He's also going to build up the kinds of things that are marks of a political success; horses, chariots, sort of the equivalent of having the entire arsenal to the Pentagon overseas in our particular context.

And he's going to make lots of money. How does he make his money? Well, look at it this way: He's got, here's where the geography comes back to haunt us, the International Coastal Highway going through his kingdom. He doesn't just let it go through. He's probably taxing left and right. As trade goes along their caravans and so forth. He's got some major cities: Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer, I'm going to talk about that in a minute. He's able to affect some taxes on all this merchandise moving back and forth. He's also able to grab exact tribute from the people that are coming under his reign and his expanded kingdom. So the wealth coming in from those particular sources and Solomon is becoming someone who is succumbing to the temptations that hit anybody and when they get into a position of power. Maybe you don't pray for your

national leaders. Maybe you don't like him. If you don't know how to pray for them, pray that they will not succumb to the horrors that accompany pride.

You saw it as you did the essay question on Saul. That it effects anybody in any kind of position who has leadership and power. Pride is a horrendous thing. And it rises really easily and I would suggest that Solomon's going in that direction, right along with others.

(Student asks question). Yes, good question. Why is it that if they acquired wealth, and it was bad, going back to Deuteronomy 17, then why does the Lord say, I'll give you wealth?

Response: Well, God is blessing him in the position that he has. And he's saying I'll give you wealth. When the wealth seems to become your focus, that's when it becomes a problem. And we learn that Solomon did indeed exact tribute, and he puts conscripted labor to work to do some of his building projects. So there's always going to be a tipping point with wealth and how you use it. You know, thank the Lord for people who are wealthy; whom God has blessed, and they use that wealth for good things. And when it's used for other kinds of things, I'm not even going to go into the direction of our current economic situation, but then greed comes in there and it goes a whole different direction. So it can have both good and bad valences to it.

Peace on the expanded kingdom, you've got a lovely little expression here in chapter 4:21, "Solomon reigned over all the kingdoms from the river to the land of the Philistine as far as the border of Egypt; they brought tribute, they're Solomon's subjects." In verse 25 it says, "During Solomon's lifetime, everybody lived in safety; each man under his own vine and fig tree." That's a figure for saying: things are safe. Living under your vine and your fig tree; means nobody is ravaging your crops. Do you remember when we talked about the book of Judges? And Gideon had to thresh his grain in a little wine press because of the Midianites? Well that's not the problem now. You're just living with your produce and all your economic resources, and you're secure with them. It's a good thing.

International trade relations. These two chapters are talking about the kinds of

trade establishments that Solomon's has and of course, the high point is the visit of the Queen Sheba to Solomon. And the fact that she can come and test him with hard questions and he answers them. They have a very interesting exchange back and forth and a lot of wealth goes back and forth in that context as well.

Going back to 1 Kings 3, it says, "Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and married his daughter. And of course, as I said a moment ago, that's going to kind of be the paradigm example of what he does with lots of other things; he brings her to the city of David. Now if you skip over to chapter 9, we see a little bit more about this. In verse 16, "Pharaoh, king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer." Do you remember where Gezer is on the map? It is one of those three cities, in verse 15 of this chapter that I am reading, that it says: Solomon is going to fortify, because it's on the international trade route. Everything that's going through Israel goes past Gezer, goes past Megiddo, and goes past Hazor. And so Solomon fortifies those cities, and makes them major cities that are going to probably be store cities, as well as places that he's going to keep a little arsenal of horses and chariots. Now having said that, here's how Solomon gets Gezer. It's sort of interesting. Verse 16, "Pharaoh, king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer; he set it on fire and he killed its Canaanite inhabitants." Israel hadn't up until this point. And then he gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife. And then you're thinking, what kind of wedding gift is that, a burned up city? Give me a break, couldn't he have given something better? But, this is actually a good present. In fact, it's the perfect present. Because what Solomon can do is start from ground zero and build exactly what he wants in that context. And he's going to build a major, fortified city there. And for reasons that I am going to point out in a map in a moment, this is also very wise, very strategic on his part. So he gets a burned out city here thinking it's nothing, but no, it's everything. He's got a free plan, and grain to go.

Well, as I've also said he's conscripts lots of people to be stone cutters and water carriers and all of those kinds of things; so we see some of the somewhat negative sides of this. Here is a map, and let's see what we need to find on here. The shaded area; this

is now Solomon's reign, his kingdom. And all the way down here, all the way down to the north end of the Gulf of Aqaba, coming up, taking in Trans-Jordan, all of those areas. Even way up here touching the Euphrates River; he's gotten an awful lot of stuff and again keep in mind that they're not big kingdoms, they're little kingdom-lets, if you will, are part of this. So here's a thing to think about: a little bit hard to see this on here but Gezer is right there. International Coastal Highway is going to run right through the land, there it is, Gezer. Where's Megiddo? Megiddo is right here, again on the international coastal highway. Where's Hazor? Hazor is there. So all traffic that's going to run from Mesopotamia down through this area down to Egypt, going past those three cities. Can't avoid it. So Solomon is pretty smart in what he's doing.

Well, that's kind of the geopolitics. We're going to talk a little bit about the wealth and so forth and about the wives; they come into that context as well. Worship is our next "W" and we're going to spend just a little bit of time just talking about worship and where Solomon does what he does in terms of building things. But let me just kind of refresh our memories of city of David and what happened in terms of Solomon's accession to the throne. You may recall from previous discussions that this little area right here the city of David. That's it. 10, 11 acres, something like that. Not big, but important because here is the Gihon Spring right down here. And that's where Solomon gets himself proclaimed king and they arrange the whole thing. David's palace area would have been right up in this area, but no temple yet. As Solomon builds the temple, he's going to expand up on to the higher region up here. The elevation difference, for those of you who just love trivia for the day; coming from this area right down to the bottom of the city of David is about 350 feet. So you're looking up, as you're looking at this section right here. And we've talked about that when we talked about Psalms on Monday. So, this will be the area where Solomon will build his temple, in this general area. Under the Dome of the Rock, right now is bedrock. You can actually see bedrock in that context. And another little place where bedrock shows up is right here. But most of this is a huge, huge temple platform built by Herod the great. In New Testament, you probably looked at these types of things. Well, we've got the City of David, we have the

Kidron Valley right over here of course, and the Gihon Spring and the temple.

Deuteronomy 12, backing up a little bit, when Moses is addressing the people in Deuteronomy he says, When the time comes, you are to bring your sacrifices, you are to come on these pilgrim festivals to the place where I will choose to put my name. He doesn't name it as Jerusalem but the place where God will choose to put his name *will be* Jerusalem. So, this is the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 12.

Let's look a little bit about the temple itself. As you read this material, one of the things that probably struck you was how much bigger all this is rather than the tabernacle. The tabernacle was God's condescension in mercy tenting right alone, with his people. The people were tenting their way through Sinai, God tents his way right along with them. Now that they're stationary, now that they have a kingdom, now we're going to build the temple. Don't think for a moment that it's not like some of the other nations round about. They had temples too and often times the structure was similar. But let's get some of the purposes down pat first. This will be a central place of worship. Now when we talk about the tabernacle, our key thing was that it was going to represent God's dwelling in their midst. Because they were a smaller group of people, they're making their way through Sinai, they're mobile, and God is with them. Here of course they've got land, various tribes have been apportioned all over the land and so it's not so much, God's still dwelling there, don't get me wrong, but the people are more spread out. Now the people need to come on pilgrim festivals. What are all three pilgrim festivals? Tabernacles, Passover, sit out the last one, Feast of Weeks. Got them? Good!

By the way, this is a total tangent. Are you ready for a total tangent? There's a wonderful rabbinic Proverb. And it runs like this: "He," because the rabbis were talking to "he's" who studied, "He who studies Torah and forgets what he studies, is like a woman who gives birth to a child and goes out and buries it." Do you like that? It's rather graphic isn't it because giving birth to a child is a painful process! It's a lot of work. No one in her right mind after her pain and anguish is going to go out and bury your kid. But forgetting what you've studied, because you've put lots of work into it, don't forget it. Because then all of that pain and anguish from studying is just gone. It's

not worth it. So remember our wonderful rabbinic Proverb and realize that as we're talking about history, we need to recall what's in, believe it or not, Torah. I'll say this again when we get to our prophets. Alright, that is our tangent.

Central place of worship. People are going to come on pilgrim festivals to worship God there and all those things that applied to those pilgrim festivals are going to be those things that are important. Now, it's also representative of sacred space. In some ways it actually does give us a sense of presence of God. Now we've said that already, but we're going to see that even more dramatically in Chronicles. I won't read these passages, because I'm kind of looking at the time right now but Chronicles, unlike Kings, does something else, and that is to emphasize even more the presence of God. So you have in chapter 5 this cloud of glory. And that shows up in Kings but not quite so immediately, and not quite so compellingly. And then also the fire descends from heaven as well. So, it is sacred space.

It's also designed to be in some way that is very simplified of course, and I'll use the term "crude," not in a bad way, but in a rough or very rugged way, a reflection of God's dwelling in heaven. And I do really want to look at these passages because they're significant. 1 Chronicles 28, first, part of David's plans for the temple, as you remember, and notice by the way that, as I said, verse 12 of 1 Chronicles 28 says, David gave Solomon all the plans that the Spirit has put on his mind, I mentioned that earlier. And now for us in verse 18, of the thing I'm getting at here, "He gave him the plan for the chariot; that is the cherubim of gold that spread their wings to shelter the ark of the covenant of the Lord."

What's this chariot and cherubim all about anyway? We've seen cherubim before. But now let's look at Ezekiel chapter 1. Again, I'm not going to spend a lot of time here, but just sort of a prelude to what we do when we actually do Ezekiel. In chapter 1, Ezekiel has a remarkable vision. And of course, it's these four creatures. And it says in verse 5, "...four living creatures, form was like a man. Each had four faces and four wings. Legs were straight, feet like those of a calf, gleamed with burnished bronze... under their wings, on four sides they had hands of a man, faces, and wings touching each

other and then if you look down a little further on, you can see it here, verse 15, wheels as well. So as Ezekiel is allowed to see into heaven, he's seeing something that has wheels, there are eyes all over the wheels, and it's this, again, in words that can be articulated but in some very simplified rough way represent a vision of heaven I would suggest. We're seeing something that's called the chariot. When you read the Psalms, it talks about God's chariot and wheels bearing Him along. And also, when the Israelites cross the Sea of Reeds. There is mention of a chariot there too. So something about God's presence has some of those features to it. And please keep in mind that it is put in terms that our very simple, finite, minds can understand and our language system can accommodate. But yet, what's being made then to put into the temple court yard has features that are representative of a very simple way of things in heaven. You should immediately be thinking, I thought they weren't supposed to do that? Second commandment, right? These are not idols for worship. These are things that God has said to make and represent symbolically what's going on in the heavenly realms and I'll show you a picture, or representation in a moment. Hebrews chapter 8, and chapter 9, these are passages we've already talked about where things that are in the temple are being shadows and copies of what we have in the heavenly realms.

Well, to be very mundane after all of that commentary, this is also the storage place for the nation's wealth and it makes perfect sense. If you've got a people, who at least should protect more than anything else, their sacred symbols, the ark of the covenant being of course, central to this, then that's going to be a place where they're going to guard it with their very lives. Why not put the nation's wealth there as well? And so the temple will indeed become, a place for the storage of wealth. Lots and lots of gold and valuable items are associated with the temple. Well, the design and the furnishings are very similar to what we see with the tabernacle except multiplied. For example, instead of one table for showbread you have ten and instead one lampstand you have ten and things are just plain bigger.

Let's see what some of this looks like from a very simplified model; this was one that was made in the UK I think, about 25-30 years ago, but it gives us a little bit of a

look at it. Notice that we have two large pillars, Yochim and Boaz, which are set up on either side on the entrance to the temple. There is something that is a little bit askew with this, if I'm reading my text correctly, because I think as I read the text correctly, the altar's width is as long as the temple is wide. And this looks a little bit smaller. But at any rate, not a problem there.

Now, we're going to zero in on this thing; that's what I'm interested in here. You have the laver, don't you? Or the wash basin, or whatever you want to call it. It's the place where the holding water, the sea, some of it's called the sea, for washing and for cleansing. And, here we have bowls with bovine creatures underneath it. Now, isn't that fascinating? Let me just throw another little piece of later literature into this. When the apostle John has his view into heaven, in chapter 4 of Revelation, what does he see? We sing about it; I think its "holy, holy, holy." He sees a glassy sea. A big sea and big expanse. Well that's a reflection of Ezekiel, the end of chapter 1, who also sees a huge expanse and above the expanse is the throne of God. What's under the expanse? Those cherubim. Isn't that interesting? So in some way, we're seeing this broad expanse of heavens, of the sea, or whatever you want to call it, being born up by cherubim. And here, it becomes symbolic cleansing to come into the presence of God. You wash in this water before you go into the throne room and the temple is the throne room of God. Just as in those visions, you go pass those cherubim who are protections; they are guardians of the throne room. You pass those and go into the real presence of God.

Now, there is lots more we could say about this. In ancient Near Eastern temples, you do have and I should have included a picture but of course, I forgot to do it, but these huge temples from areas in Mesopotamia. Particularly Assyrian temples, would have absolutely mammoth creatures made out of stone standing on either side to the entrance to the temple. They were winged creatures and they look a whole lot like what might have been guarding the temple here as well. Again, going inside, noticing we've got multiple lampstands here, not just one. This is the Holy Place, as we had in the tabernacle but now it's a stationary static building. And of course, our Most Holy Place, the Ark of the Covenant and these very huge representations again, cherubim guarding

the throne of God. But keep in mind, it is not totally foreign or divorced from what the wider cultural context because, as I just said, you have in a wider culture, you have these great stone creatures guarding kings' throne rooms too. So here the statement is: God is King and he's the ultimate King. Well, from entrance, courtyard, altar, laver, and I think that's it.

A couple things we need to say with how the Levites function. What was one of their major functions when the tabernacle was in operation? What did the Levites do? They took care of it and you can go even further with that tabernacle thing, tent thing, moving thing. They're the ones responsible for packing it up carrying it, setting it up, etc. Now of course, once you have a temple, they're not going to be doing that anyway. That's not their function. But they do have some very significant things; all along, Levite priests were supposed to be teachers. But now we have some other things that they're doing. They serve as gate keepers, and in some ways, a development and continuation of what they had been doing before. Because you'll remember that the Levitical families were stationed right around the tabernacle area. Now they're gate keepers of the temple.

This is the interesting one: they're musicians, temple musicians. And of course Chronicles does have a lot to say about this. Music and prophesying often go together. When we get to Elijah, we're going to see that again so you have a linkage of the Levites providing music for the oracular presentation of God's words. The other thing that I want to just harp on a little bit here is that they're music is excellent. Did you read this material? These are trained musicians. And what they do in the temple context is excellent. The text is very clear to let us know that. They're not wandering around and playing away saying I'm making a joyful noise to God, I hope. There's a place for that but not in the worship context.

They're also in charge of the treasuries, and that's significant. That's a responsibility. These things can't be abused, and they serve as officials, they serve as judges. And we've seen little vestiges of that or little hints towards that already when we were reading Deuteronomy when it was talking about bringing cases before the Lord. Part of that is going to be function of Levites. Both in their individual towns I would

suggest and possibly Jerusalem.

Well, the dedication of this takes place on the Feast of Tabernacles; 7th month except it doesn't say Feast of Tabernacles, it says in the Feast of the seventh month and so we can kind of deduce that. And Solomon prays a wonderful prayer. Which I'm not going to read to you but just have you make sure you highlight these things. He's going to go back and reflect on God's previous promises, which by the way are a tremendous model for prayer if you'd like it. Reflect on God's previous promises and where we stand at a given point of time in relationship to those promises and our thankfulness to those promises for God's faithfulness. Not a bad idea. He also makes it clear that this is intended to be the dwelling place for God's name. And we don't want to lose sight of the fact that that name is powerful. That's why there are so many commandments against lifting up the name of the Lord to emptiness. The Name is important, and the Name is powerful.

But then going on, most of the prayer focuses on what will happen if people are disobedient. If for example, they're disobedient the rain might cease. If they had turned and come to the temple and prayed, then may God restore them. If they're disobedient and they get taken off into captivity but they return and repent, they turn towards the place and prayed, then God will restore them. He goes through a number of those covenant curses and we saw when we read Leviticus 26 as well as Deuteronomy 27 and 28.

So Solomon's prayer isn't just off the top of his head somewhere. He's praying based on the covenant. Both the covenant with David, and also the covenant from Sinai and that's important. The dedication ceremony, a remarkable time. Lots of sacrifices being offered and by the way, these aren't just sacrifices as all wholesale slaughter; there's a whole bunch of people there. And they're participating by eating part of the fellowship offerings. That's what is going on in that context.

As you know, the presence of God manifests itself dramatically and then, we have God's response. Which is longer than this but this is one of the passages that I think you know. Perhaps you've memorized this in some context or another. It's coming as God's

further response to Solomon's prayer. And of course, it's a beautiful statement. One that if you haven't memorized yet, it might be nice to memorize. I see that it sort of faded right into the fabric of the red there, but when even after Solomon's prayer, when things go bad, God says, "If my people humble themselves, pray, seek my face, turn from their wicked ways." There are some criteria here: humble, pray, seek God, turn away, repentance, then God will indeed restore us. So it's something to keep in mind that certainly was important as this temple dedication is brought to a closure. Now that's sort of the good developments. Solomon comes to the end of his reign and as I said earlier, this is the content that's not in Chronicles because this is a little bit sordid and maybe not as fun to read. But, just as the closure of David's reign brought us in preparation to see the temple being built and Solomon, now we're going to see the preparation, whether we like it or not, for the split of the kingdom.

Solomon has made lots of political alliances. Verse 1 of chapter 11, "He loved many foreign women", and that love by the way is talking about that political alliances, "he marries them," it says he "fell fast to them in love", 700 wives of royal birth again, noting that political connection. Three hundred concubines and his wives led him astray. So then, he turns to idolatry. And it talks in verse 5 about all the various gods and goddesses of idolatry. The Lord is not really happy with this. And so God is going to say in two different places that something is going to happen. First of all, the Lord says to Solomon, chapter 11, verse 11, "Since you've not kept my covenant, I will tear the kingdom away and give it to one of your subordinates. I'll leave you one tribe, because of David, but the kingdom is going to be torn away."

Adversaries come up, and I have noted or the three major ones here. Edom had been under Solomon's control. Well, that fractures a little bit and this Edomite leader is leading things. Aram, that area that is the buffer zone between Israel and Mesopotamia, Assyria, that has some fracturing. And then we have our major person, Jeroboam son of Nebat. Verse 26 of chapter 11, "He rebelled against the king". We don't know what that rebellion consisted of. It doesn't tell us.

But what's happening in the next couple of verses is our second notice that God

has determined. Do you remember these things that God's sort of keeping things certain by means of two different statements? We've seen the different statements over and over again. Most recently with Saul; getting the kingdom, and losing the kingdom. Now, we have it with Solomon. God is going to inform him in two different ways; the kingdom is going to be gone. The first one is to Solomon directly, and the second one informs us. Verse 29, Jeroboam is going out of Jerusalem, Ahijah who is the prophet, who is from Shiloh. Shiloh has some important connections, doesn't it? He meets him, and he says in verse 30, "Here's a new cloak" and tears it in 12 pieces. And then he says, take 10 and those 12 are going to be yours. Because God says, he's going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes. You, being Jeroboam here. One tribe will be preserved. So we have two different intimations that Solomon is going to lose the kingdom. Well, the tragedy is that he doesn't turn from his ways, and after 40 years he dies.

Before we pick up with the divided kingdom, we're going to take another detour. The detour is going to be into wisdom literature because three of the four books that are considered wisdom books are associated with Solomon: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. In that context we're also going to do Job. So starting next week, there is going to be a move into wisdom literature for a while and then we'll pick up the divided kingdom. In the meantime: Shabot shalom. Have a splendid weekend!

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