

**JUNE 12**

**1 Kings 9-10**

1 Kings 9

Vs. 1-9 So when did this happen? Back when we read 1 Kings 7:1, it seemed that Solomon could have built the temple and his house at the same time. Verse 10 says that after twenty years, Solomon had completed the king's house. That would mean that the seven years building the temple were followed by the thirteen years building the palace. The Lord spoke to Solomon before he built the temple and now, twenty years later. If the temple was finished and dedicated after seven years, it means that since yesterday's reading, and the dedication of the temple, thirteen years have now passed. I wonder why God waited until after Solomon stopped building to speak to him. Maybe Solomon was too busy. Isn't it interesting that if you don't look at the dates, you might think that God spoke to Solomon the day after he dedicated the temple, simply because it's the next thing you read. However, thirteen years had passed.

Vs. 4-5 Though the promise that the king who would reign forever would come through Judah (and now through David) was unconditional, the promise for establishing the throne under Solomon was conditional. He had to obey. We know the end of the story: He didn't. After Solomon there would never again be an independent, unified Israel. God is full of grace and forgiveness, but He doesn't play games. The line of David would only rule over the land of Judah. After the exile (which Solomon helps to launch), Israel will never again be a sovereign nation with a king. Even though the first governor after the exile will be Zerubbabel, who is in the line of David, he is only a governor under Persian authority. After Zerubbabel, the line of David passes out of our sight until Jesus.

Vs. 6-9 How ironic that God will bear testimony to His own righteousness and truth by destroying all that Solomon built, should Solomon disobey. God was giving Solomon a very kind and gentle warning.

Apparently, completing the temple and his own house marked a specific point in Solomon's life. Now what would he do? When people lose their goal in life, they often drift. I'm amazed at the wisdom of the Lord in giving us a mission on earth. To lose our passion for our mission just means we're drifting on earth. What a waste of time. But to live in the harvest following Christ, making disciples, who make disciples, should keep our vision clear and our blood flowing right up to the end. Too bad Solomon didn't have anything left but being Solomon.

Vs. 10-14 So, what is this story about? I think it is showing that there is something wrong with Solomon, evidenced in how he treated his friend. The word *Cabul* is definable from the context: worthless or good for nothing. Solomon put so much time into his own pursuits, but very little into these cities. He could have turned these places into a paradise, but his focus apparently was on himself.

Vs. 15-28 What do you find in all of this detail? I don't know. I think it's interesting that there is one small mention of Solomon's worship and many references to his other activities. This is a good place to remember what God had said about what a king was to avoid and what he was to do.

*Only 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." And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.*

*And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them, that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and*

*that he may not turn aside from the commandment, either to the right hand or to the left, so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:16-20)*

Notice in these verses, not only was a king warned what not to do, but also in v. 19 it says he should read the law every day of his life. If a king would have obeyed vs. 18-20, humbling himself before the Lord, submitting to the Levites, making a copy of the law and reading it every day, he would have been guided, protected and warned by the Lord every day. And, according to John 14:21-23, he would have known the Lord intimately. It is safe to say that none of the kings did this every day for his entire life. We've seen the wreckage in David's life, and Solomon will now excel David in terms of damage done to the nation of God and the redemptive plan for mankind.

This is written here for our instruction. If we think we can survive without being in the Word every day, we are ignoring the seriousness of the sin within us and we are ignoring what the Lord is saying to us through these men.

V. 28 Apparently Solomon liked gold and ignored Deuteronomy 17:17. Remembering that a talent was 75 pounds makes it interesting to figure out the weight of all the mentions of gold that Solomon acquired yearly. It isn't pounds. It is tons.

### 1 Kings 10

Vs. 1-13 What do you observe in this story? It seems to me that it shows the testimony that God was making to the nations through His blessing on Israel. This was actually a part of the redemptive plan that God sought to work through Israel to the surrounding nations. Moses expressed this in Deuteronomy 4:5-9.

*See, I have taught you statutes and rules, as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do them in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us, whenever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?*

*Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children—*

You can see in what the queen of Sheba says in v. 9, that she understood this was of the Lord. I wonder if the other "stuff" and all the "bling" didn't get in the way of a full and complete testimony to the Lord.

Vs. 14-29 Think about all of this detail in terms of Deuteronomy 17 above. Even more than Solomon ignoring what God said about going to Egypt for horses is that the first thing he did as a king was to make an alliance with Egypt and marry Pharaoh's daughter. The worst is yet to come and, ironically, Egypt really hurt Solomon.

As disciples, we have some very grave lessons to learn from Solomon. Up until now we have seen some minor "cracks" in his life that seem completely overshadowed by God's blessing and Solomon's expressive worship. But the cracks remained and now appear to be getting bigger. Regardless of what we have accomplished for Christ, no matter how glowing our devotion has been in the past, allowing sin into our lives (as seen with David) brings disaster. Buckle up and put on your helmet. What we'll see tomorrow with Solomon will be unbelievable. What will be more unbelievable will be God's grace.

### **Acts 8:14-40**

Vs. 14-25 Now, you might ask why Peter and John went to Samaria and not Thomas and Thaddeus. I think it is because this was a very important event, and the apostles wanted to send the two men that God had already singled out as the authoritative voice of the apostles.

V. 16 The *only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus* doesn't mean anything was missing in the formula, but that everyone knew that the Holy Spirit was missing.

It is interesting that Peter and John had to lay their hands on the Samaritans. To understand what this meant for the Christians in Jerusalem, like Peter and John, try to imagine what it would have been like years ago in a very racially bigoted area for a white preacher to have given an altar call and have a black man come forward and lay his hands upon him. It shouldn't be assumed that just because the apostles and other believers were saved and indwelt by the Spirit that their racial prejudices fell away. They didn't. That is part of the drama being played out here by God, withholding the Spirit until two leaders of the Jerusalem church (true-blue Jews) saw for themselves how the Spirit came upon the despised Samaritans as they laid their hands on them. I wonder if they both went for the anti-bacterial gel after they touched them.

One more thought here: How did they know the people received the Spirit? It doesn't say, yet it was noticeable or visible, even by Simon the rat. It can be assumed that there was a display similar to what happened to the disciples and apostles on Pentecost. What happens to Cornelius (a Gentile) later, we know, will be completely identical to the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. The reception of the Spirit in a visible way was a point of connection that helped the Jewish Christians let go of their prejudice toward the Samaritans and the Gentiles.

V. 18 This whole drama with Simon seems like "just a story," but I think it is similar to the story of Ananias and Sapphira. With A&S, the threat to the church that would grow would be seeking position and status in the church through giving. With Simon we see someone who recognized the status that would come with using God's power. You probably think this would be impossible to use God's power for personal gain, but Paul tells Timothy it was happening (1 Tim. 6:5); and Jesus said that many would come, calling Him Lord, who had prophesied, done mighty works, and cast out demons. The problem was they didn't know Him and He didn't know them. Here, I think, we see the first entrepreneur who figured out how to market the blessing of God.

V. 21 It should be noted that not everyone who recognizes Jesus' person and authority goes to heaven. The demons know Jesus, but don't love and follow Him. Simon believed in the reality of the power, but he didn't love Christ. He just wanted the power and the honor. In that case, as Peter made pretty clear to him, he really wasn't "saved" by what he believed, anymore than the demons are saved by what they know to be fact.

V. 25 I think preaching through the towns of Samaria was a big step for these two guys. At one point John was ready to call down fire on the Samaritans. I'll bet Peter and John smiled at each other as they realized that Jesus had prepared them for this moment. Maybe they realized this was the fulfillment of part of what Jesus had told them in His final words to them in Acts 1:8, *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.*

Jerusalem: Check! Judea and Samaria: Check! Now for the ends of the earth...

Vs. 26-40 The Ethiopian eunuch, not Cornelius, was the first Gentile we know who came to Christ. So God used Philip, one of the seven, not only to open Samaria, but also the ends of the earth.

V. 26 If an angel of the Lord told Philip to do this, it means Philip must have seen the angel. Later, Philip will be given instructions by the Spirit. I assume this was an audible voice in his head. It must have been an angel that walked up to Philip and told him what to do and Philip recognized him, by the Spirit, as being such.

V. 27 What is interesting is that the eunuch had *come to Jerusalem to worship*; but because he was a eunuch, he was not welcome in the assembly at worship. This would have put this guy a step below a proselyte. So, he must have been a very convinced believer in Judaism since he had everything else, nationality and physical state, going against him. (I mean, really though, would they check you at the door?)

V. 31 Really. Another "What must I do to be saved?" situation. And the guy was reading Isaiah 53 (which, by the way, you should memorize). In those days, apparently, you read out loud, so Philip knew where he was in the text.

V. 36 Somehow this doesn't happen every day.

V. 39 So, the eunuch, we assume, received the Holy Spirit. That would be normal: you believe, you receive and the Holy Spirit silently comes in. Philip being swept away was not normal then or very normative for today.

V. 40 Philip is an unsung hero as a disciple. What a guy. We'll see Philip again twenty years later at Caesarea toward the end of Acts. Apparently he settled there. Caesarea would become a very important hub for the church and the next big Gentile adventure will happen there.

So, is what we're seeing in Acts completely normative for today? We don't see believers saved without receiving the Spirit. This was for the period of Acts, to convince the apostles. I have never heard of anyone taken miles away instantly after baptizing someone. Can God do it today? Sure. Is it a common occurrence? No, not even in Acts. Yet, as disciples, the leading of the Spirit in Acts, though not as dramatic today, might be closer to the norm than we think. The question has more to do with our willingness to focus our lives on following Christ in the harvest, making disciples and being led by the Spirit.

## **Psalm 130**

I'm sure as the pilgrims came to Jerusalem three times a year, many people couldn't completely resonate with every psalm being sung, because their hearts were being pressed by their circumstances. In worship there is a sense of knowing that God is our only hope, and we wait on the deliverance and answer only He can give. This psalm would have echoed their deep need to find hope and comfort in God.

Vs. 1-2 At this point we don't know why they are pleading for mercy, but they are pleading.

Vs. 3-4 It is for their personal sin. Which of us cannot cry out to God for mercy for what we've done this past week, much less in the past three months or the past year? Do you remember the weight of your sin before you knew Jesus? Do you sense the weight of the sin within you now?

Vs. 5-6 What wonderful words. Our souls *wait for the Lord* and we hope *in His Word*. But our waiting is over because we know the living Word and we live with Him every day.

Vs. 7-8 Notice all of the key themes of life: hope, love, redemption and forgiveness from our sin, oh, and the Lord.

There is a kind of living in affliction and waiting before God that is constant and godly, and you are only trained for it by living on this planet, being afflicted and having to wait. The result of momentary affliction is that we cry out to God and learn that He is our hope and our deliverance. This can produce a spiritual sense of affliction and waiting. You see the world as God sees it, and you make the choice to be "hungry now" and to "weep now" as we walk this planet following Christ in the harvest. You live, crying out, waiting on and clinging to God, our hope. We learn to keep crying out even in joy. The urgency of this life doesn't diminish if we're doing well or in a good mood. We learn to see things in the spiritual, and the spiritual situation is pretty sobering and desperate.

Jesus said that the person who is forgiven much...loves much. If we know how deeply needy we are and how deeply urgent the drama of this life is, the love of Christ and His calling are a great source of joy and worship.

If you have some time and a computer search engine (or concordance), search for the word "wait." Then read those occurrences you find in The Psalms and in Isaiah.

## **Proverbs 17:2-3**

I guess many things can test the heart. Working for an immature, out-of-control master, foreman or boss would not qualify as fun. Acting wisely is the key. Living for the honor of God is the heart of our wisdom as disciples. The testing is not God's "plan B." The Father prunes us to become more fruitful in the harvest. That is "plan A."