

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 32.6%

Weekly Readings will cover: 2 Chronicles 4 – 9, 1 Kings 8 – 10, 2 Chronicles 1:14 – 17, 1 Kings 4 & Psalms 72 & 127

Sunday: 2 Chronicles 4

Monday: 2 Chronicles 5, 2 Chronicles 6:1 – 11 & 1 Kings 8:1-21

Tuesday: 2 Chronicles 6:12 – 42 & 1 Kings 8:22 – 53

Wednesday: 2 Chronicles 7, 1 Kings 8:54 – 66, & 1 Kings 9:1 – 9

Thursday: 2 Chronicles 8, & 1 Kings 9:10 – 28

Friday: 2 Chronicles 9:1 – 28, 1 Kings 10 & 2 Chronicles 1:14 – 17

Saturday: 1 Kings 4, Psalm 72 & Psalm 127

Current # of email addresses in the group: 614

I hope you each had a blessed and inspiring study week. I apologize for getting this out a little later than normal. I try my best to get this done by Friday, but this was one of those weeks where it seemed everything was fighting against me. We had a washing machine problem, a legal matter to attend to and then my laptop just completely died and my many attempts to revive it did not work. Such is life. I thought maybe this week's reading plan wouldn't get done, but thankfully I was able to get up early today and finish it so that we could keep going this week! Praise God!

When laying out the reading week, I try to keep whole chapters together when I can, but this week proved especially challenging in that regard. Please pay close attention to which verses we are supposed to read each day. Have a great week!

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

### **3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 55**

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 358 - SUNDAY: February 4<sup>th</sup>

2 Chronicles 4 (recall 1 Kings 7:23 – 51)

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “To construct the temple, Solomon employed the skills of a master craftsman, Hiram (or Hiram), fetched from Hiram king of Tyre. As explained in previous readings, he was the

son of a Tyrian man who himself was a metalworker, but there's some minor confusion regarding his mother. According to 2 Chronicles 2:14, his mother was "of the daughters of Dan," yet 1 Kings 7:14 informs us that she was "of the tribe of Naphtali." One explanation may be that Hiram's mother was a Danite woman who had formerly married a Naphtalite man and thereby became a Naphtalite by marriage. In that case, we could assume that her first husband died and she then married a Tyrian man, Hiram's father.

Hiram worked in bronze, an alloy of copper (about 80%) and tin (about 20%); brass is an alloy of copper (about 60%) and zinc (about 40%). While scholars still debate somewhat whether the Hebrew *nechosheth* should be translated *brass* or *bronze*, the weight of evidence seems to prefer bronze. Copper was readily available in many places, and the Phoenicians—actually a Tyrian-Sidonian-Israelite alliance—controlled a brisk trade in tin mined in southwest England. Zinc was a relatively unknown metal in Solomon's day.

Hiram's works, no doubt guided by God as with the construction of the original tabernacle furnishings, were truly remarkable. He oversaw the design and construction of the great cherubim whose wings overshadowed the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place; the altar of incense, the table of showbread, and the great candlestick and its instruments, all of which were in the Holy Place; the two pillars which stood in the porch of the temple, as well as their adornments; the great altar, on which all sacrifices were offered; the laver (ceremonial washbasin) called *the Sea*, in which the priests washed; the 10 mobile lavers, in which the burnt offerings were washed; the shovels, which were used to remove the ashes of the altar; the basins, which were used to catch the blood of the sacrifices; the pots, which were used to remove the innards of the sacrifices; the 10 tables, on which the sacrifices were prepared; and the doors of the temple." [END]

Verse 5 – According to a number of sources, a bath (liquid measure) is equal to about 5.75 gallons or 22 liters. This Sea of cast bronze is also mentioned in 1 Kings 7:23-26 where it is said to contain 2,000 baths (instead of 3,000). The verbs are different in each place and 3,000 may be in reference to its maximum amount it could hold, where they typically filled it only with 2,000 baths.

Day 359 - MONDAY: February 5<sup>th</sup>

2 Chronicles 5, 2 Chronicles 6:1 – 11 & 1 Kings 8:1-21

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “Of all the days that ever passed upon the earth, surely the day that Solomon dedicated the temple must rank as one of the most awesome. The temple was a magnificent creation, with stunning gold, silver, bronze, jewels, marble, engraving and woodwork adorning its every feature. To be in its courts must have been a breathtaking experience!

The dedication of this extraordinary edifice—every aspect of which was masterfully designed to express and extol the magnificence of the One who dwelt within—was an occasion that called for the greatest pomp and ceremony. To the dedication Solomon invited Israel's most important dignitaries. Two groups are specifically mentioned in 1 Kings 8:1—the "elders of Israel" *and* “the heads of the tribes, the chiefs of the fathers of the children of Israel.” Some have concluded that these two groups are distinct—representing the government of Israel in its national and tribal components. Those with this view see the "elders of Israel" as the members of the governing body in Israel's *national* government, functioning, it is surmised, somewhat like a House of Lords or Senate. According to the same view, the "heads of the tribes, the chiefs of the fathers of the children of Israel," apparently one from each tribe, are seen as the senior members of the individual *tribal* governments. We know for sure that Israel's government was not an absolute monarchy. It was "constitutional"—that is, rather than the king's word being the highest law of the land, his

own powers derived from the written law of Moses as given by God, to which he was himself answerable. It also appears that Israel's government may have been a *federal* monarchy—the word "federal" describing a system wherein separate states are united under one central authority while retaining certain regulatory powers.

The dedication of the temple occurred in the Feast of the seventh month (1 Kings 8:2, 2 Chronicles 5:3). This may seem somewhat odd, as the temple construction ceased in the *eighth* month (1 Kings 6:38). This means that the temple stood unoccupied for nearly a year before it was dedicated. Why did Solomon choose to wait 11 months before dedicating this magnificent edifice? It may be that all of the temple furnishings were not yet complete. Of course, it may also be that everything was complete and that Solomon simply waited intentionally. The Bible doesn't spell out the reason for the delay.

Whatever the case, it is interesting that the dedication took place in the feast of the seventh month. But just which feast *was* this—the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles or the Eighth Day (also known as the Last Great Day)—all of which fall during that same month? (See Leviticus 23.) It should be noted that only one of God's annual festivals is elsewhere actually called simply the "Feast of the Lord"—i.e., the Feast of Tabernacles (see Leviticus 23:39). A seven-day festival, it was clearly *the* major feast of the seventh month. Yet 1 King 8:65-66 records that the dedication of the temple was *14* days. Strangely, however, it says that the people were sent away on the *eighth* day. As it makes no sense for this to mean the eighth day out of 14, these verses must mean that the 14th day of the dedication feast was *the* Eighth Day—that is, Tishri 22 on the Hebrew Calendar or what we now often refer to as the Eighth Day—and that the people were dismissed at the end of that day. In fact, 2 Chronicles 7:9-10 states that the people observed the dedication of the altar for seven days and the feast for seven days, finally being sent away on the

23rd day of the seventh month, which must mean the very beginning of that day at sunset (which would also be the end of the 22nd, i.e., the end of the Eighth Day). Thus, the feast of the dedication clearly began prior to the Feast of Tabernacles—with the entire period apparently being looked upon as one expanded Feast of Tabernacles.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the Kingdom of God and is, therefore, eminently the Kingdom Feast, looking to the future enthronement of the divine King, Jesus Christ, and the inauguration of the government of God on Earth. Thus, the enthronement symbolism is fitting for the enthronement of God in His temple.

In a stupendous display, "the glory of the Lord"—an awesome glowing cloud—"filled the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 8:11). "As a cloud had covered the tabernacle and God's glory had filled it when it was inaugurated (Exodus 40:34), so now a cloud filled the temple. This visible presence of God's dwelling with His people—sometimes called the '*shekinah* [indwelling] glory'—gave the people assurance and incentive for obedient and holy living" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 1 Kings 8:10-11).

As for Solomon's speech, given before he passionately prays that God will always hear and respond to the prayers of His people, he recounts the promise God made to David in 2 Samuel 7, where God foretold an enduring dynasty descended from David. Solomon specifically identifies himself as the son who, as God promised, would build the temple. This speech, divinely sanctioned and preserved for all time by God in Scripture, verifies that the promise made to David in 2 Samuel 7 refers to Solomon, the *immediate* son of David. It invalidates attempts to "spiritualize" the promises of 2 Samuel 7 regarding David's house—that is, mistakenly claiming they are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Although Jesus *is* building God's Church, God's *spiritual* temple, nevertheless the promise made by God to David through the prophet Nathan referred to

a literal and immediate son of David—and that David's dynasty would continue forever from that time. While there is likely duality in 2 Samuel 7, the *primary* and *intended* meaning of the promise to David concerns a successor son and a literal physical temple—and a literal dynasty beginning at that time that would never end.” [END]

1 Kings 8: Verse 9 – In Hebrews 9:4, we are told that inside the ark were “the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant;”

The Albert Barnes commentary states: “Comparing this statement with Heb 9:4, it would seem that Solomon, now that the sacred chest had reached its final resting-place, and stood in a large chamber surrounded by tables 2Ch 4:8, removed the pot of manna and the rod from the interior, and set them elsewhere in the holy of holies.” [END]

The Cambridge Bible commentary adds this: “The Old Testament narrative (Exo 16:34) says that the pot of manna was laid up ‘before the testimony’ and the same expression is used (Num 17:10) concerning Aaron’s rod. This does not define whether they were put inside or on the outside of the ark. But it is most probable that during the time when the ark was moved from place to place they were kept inside it, but as soon as it was placed within the Temple they were removed. For the tables of stone were alone intended to be stored in the ark, being ‘the testimony (Exo 25:16) which God had given to Israel.’ The other things would still be ‘before the testimony’ if they were placed outside.” [END]

Day 360 - TUESDAY: February 6<sup>th</sup>

2 Chronicles 6:12 – 42 & 1 Kings 8:22 – 53

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “Solomon's prayer of dedication is interesting in many respects. In 2 Chronicles 6:12-17 Solomon brings up God's promise to David and asks for its fulfillment. This passage is used

by some to declare that the promise of God to David in 2 Samuel 7 is conditional, with gainsayers noting that Solomon said, "You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, *only if* your sons take heed to their way, that they walk in My law as you have walked before Me" (verse 16). The *only if*, it is asserted, makes it conditional. And since David's descendants did not continue to walk in his ways, God was not bound to fulfill the promise of an enduring dynasty (except, they further assert, through Christ, David's "greater son").

But this is simply not so. This phrase—*only if*—is a Hebraism, that is, a figure of speech that cannot be literally translated into another language and still retain its meaning. In Hebrew, the phrase *only if* conveys the general meaning "but be certain that," and is intended to convey the strongest of affirmations, injunctions or prohibitions. It does not convey qualification.

Solomon's dedicatory prayer makes repeated mention of praying "toward this place," a clear intimation that the temple was to become the center of a world religion—that is, the true religion God gave was to become worldwide. In his prayer, Solomon anticipates both a worldwide dispersal of Israelites (whether through commerce, colonization or captivity) and a turning of the gentiles to the worship of God. Whether he understood the full implications of his words is unclear, but God certainly inspired him with prophetic thoughts. Specific subjects include answering prayers for forgiveness, justice, deliverance from captivity and military attack, mercy while in captivity, rain and good harvests, respite from plagues and agricultural devastation, and the prayers of the gentiles made in the temple (implying gentile converts to the true religion). In all these matters, Solomon beseeches God to hear and answer.

But Solomon does not portray God as a sort of cosmic genie, duty-bound to grant wishes upon request. Before mentioning the various kinds of things that people would pray for, Solomon soberly conditions the minds of his hearers as to exactly *who* will dwell within this magnificent temple. God is a God of kept promises given freely in grace, not because He is under compulsion to do so. And He is a God who cannot be confined to a building, no matter how magnificent it is. God dwells in heaven and is *not* man's creation! God is supreme and cannot be bound. In short, *God is sovereign*, and every petitioner must have an acute awareness of his need for God's mercy, grace and providence.”  
[END]

Day 361 - WEDNESDAY: February 7<sup>th</sup>

2 Chronicles 7, 1 Kings 8:54 – 66, & 1 Kings 9:1 – 9

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “Solomon's prayer was answered in the most miraculous of ways—a bolt of fire fell from heaven and consumed the sacrifices on the altar. Also, "the glory of the LORD filled the temple" (2 Chronicles 7:1)—the awesome radiant cloud of God's presence. Thereupon the king and the elders of Israel dedicated the temple by offering sacrifices in abundance and with great joy. Following the initial days of dedication came the Feast of Tabernacles and the Eighth Day. And Solomon "sent the people away to their tents, joyful and glad of heart for the good that the LORD had done for David, for Solomon, and for His people Israel." This event marks one of the few times that Israel was in harmony with God, joyful in their portion and grateful to their God.

First Kings 9 relates that *after* Solomon had completed all his building projects—the temple, Solomon's residence, the queen's residence and the buildings of the national government—God appeared to him a second time. This seems to be indicated in 2 Chronicles 7:11-12 as well. Yet 1 Kings 9:10 appears to state that 20 years marked the completion



of the building projects, a timing factor not mentioned in 2 Chronicles. And if that is what 1 Kings 9:10 is indicating, then, since Solomon began building the temple in the fourth year of his reign, the appearance of God would have occurred in his 24th year as king.

God appeared and made promises to Solomon. Once again, these promises are closely related to the promise God made to David in 2 Samuel 7. And, once again, some argue that the words of God to Solomon make His promise to David conditional. But they do not—the promise to David was and remains unconditional. God told Solomon that He had accepted his prayer, and that He would hear the prayers of Israel made toward the temple, and show mercy and forgiveness when His people repented. Then God added, "As for *you...*" (2 Chronicles 7:17), speaking of Solomon, *not* David. Now, what did God promise *Solomon*?

God promised that *if* he remained faithful, God would establish *his*—*Solomon's*—throne forever, as He had promised David. The promise to David was unconditional—one of his descendants would sit on a throne ruling over the children of Israel in every generation. But now God extends to Solomon the opportunity to ensure that this descendant would *also* be a descendant of Solomon. If Solomon sinned, then the punishment would be the destruction of the *kingdom*, not an immediate end to the dynasty of Solomon. If Solomon sinned, Israel would be taken from the land as a captive people. But God did not say that *at the time Israel was taken captive* Solomon's throne would also cease. God promised that the *kingdom* would be destroyed. Whether Solomon's dynasty would be extinguished at that time too was not stated. In point of fact, the Bible *later* reveals that Solomon's dynasty *will* end at Christ's second coming to take the throne (as Christ, by His mother, was a descendant of David through David's son Nathan, not Solomon). But until then, Solomon's dynasty would continue—and

does so today (see "The Throne of Britain: Its Biblical Origin and Future").

The beautiful and profound wording of 2 Chronicles 7:14 has made it one of the most well-known Bible verses to those who look to Scripture for inspiration and guidance in prayer." [END]

1 Kings 8:

Verse 63 – Here we are told that this sacrifice of 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep were peace offerings. As a reminder back to our study in Leviticus, the peace offerings were the only offerings all who were clean in Israel could eat and participate in. What a feast! At this special moment in Israel when God's presence was with His people, they all fellowshiped together in peace and abundance, as if they all sat down together at a table for a meal (God, His priests and His Holy people). It is a wonderful visual picture of the harmony that was intended to be enjoyed.

Day 362 - THURSDAY: February 8<sup>th</sup>

2 Chronicles 8, & 1 Kings 9:10 – 28

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "Solomon's other works consisted largely of building projects in various cities, securing Israel's frontiers and building an institutionalized army. He seized Hamath Zobah, a region on Israel's northeast border containing two cities, Hamath and Zobah, the former of which had formerly been friendly with David but now, given its association with Zobah, had probably switched allegiance. He built Tadmor in the wilderness (called by the Romans Palmyra) in a fertile oasis just to the southeast of Zobah. He built Hazor in northern Israel upon the high ground overlooking Lake Merom. He rebuilt Gezer in Ephraim, which had been attacked and burned by Pharaoh, its Canaanite inhabitants exterminated, and then given to his daughter as a gift upon her marriage to Solomon. He rebuilt upper and

lower Beth Horon, two cities located in Ephraim and separated by about two miles. He refortified Baalath in Dan. And he rebuilt or fortified Megiddo, which occupied a strategic position on the Plain of Esdraelon on the border of Issachar and Mannaseh. As may be seen from the list of localities, Solomon directed his attention to securing Israel's northern borders. This is also evidence that tends to confirm our understanding of Solomon's marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh as an alliance with Egypt to diminish or eliminate a threat from Israel's south.

In addition, Solomon built the Millo, apparently a landfill between Mount Zion and Mount Moriah, thereby reducing the valley between the two prominences. And he greatly extended the wall of Jerusalem, finally fully enclosing both the lower city and the upper city.

As is well known, Israel did not exterminate all the gentile inhabitants of the land when Joshua brought Israel across Jordan. These people continued to live in the land. Solomon conscripted these peoples into forced labor for his many building projects.

Additionally, Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh into her new residence. Formerly she had dwelt in the lower city of Jerusalem, but not in the house of David for, since the Ark of the Covenant had been there, Solomon felt that this gentile woman's presence in a place hallowed by the ark would have been unacceptable. This is evidence that the daughter of Pharaoh was not fully converted to the worship of God, otherwise she would have been esteemed an Israelite and able to partake of all the privileges of an Israelite. Her presence would not have been defiling.

Solomon also installed the system of worship that David had defined for the temple. The priesthood served by courses assigned to the major houses of the sons of Aaron. The proper sacrifices were offered on all

the days observed by Israel—weekly Sabbaths, monthly new moons, and annual feasts. Thus was everything set in its place for the continual and orderly worship of God in His temple.

The final record in this section concerns the ports of Ezion Geber near Elath on Israel's extreme southeastern border upon the "Red Sea"—actually the Gulf of Aqaba, a "finger" of the Red Sea. Here a fleet of ships was built and manned under a joint venture between Solomon and Hiram. This southern seaport would serve as Israel's major port of entry and the point of departure for Ophir (the location of which is still in dispute). Such southern trade was extremely lucrative, and the fact that the Phoenician Hiram, king of Tyre, was engaged with Solomon at this port far removed from Tyre is one more piece of evidence that Israel was far from a landlocked little country notable only for its preoccupation with monotheism, as some scholars habitually picture it. Israel was in alliance with the Phoenicians, and the worldwide trading empire we know as the Phoenician Empire was at that time actually an Israelite-Phoenician union.

Interestingly, as pointed out previously in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on [Exodus 13:17-14:30](#), the Hebrew term translated "Red Sea" in verse 26 is *Yam Suf* (supposedly literally "Sea of Reeds")—the same name given in the book of Exodus to the body of water that Moses and the Israelites crossed. The fact that a finger of the Red Sea could bear this name disproves the idea taught by many that *Yam Suf* must refer to a swamp or marshy lake with reed plants like cattails, rushes and papyrus. Evidently, *Yam Suf* can also mean "Sea of Seaweed," as *suf* obviously means seaweed in Jonah 2:5." [END]

2 Chronicles 8:

Verse 13 – The daily sacrifices were outlined in Exodus 29:18 & Numbers 28:4, the Sabbath in Numbers 28:9, the new Moons in

Numbers 28:11 and sacrifices for the Feasts of God are found in the end of Numbers 28 and in Numbers 29.

1 Kings 9:

Verse 13 – The John Gill commentary states: “Some interpret the word shut up, or unfruitful, sandy, dirty, clayey; so in the Talmud it is said to be a sandy land, and called Cabul, because a man's foot was plunged in it up to his ankles, and is represented as unfruitful. Josephus says, in the Phoenician tongue it signifies "not pleasing", which agrees with what Hiram says, 1Ki 9:12. Hillerus interprets it "as nothing", they being as nothing to Hiram, of no use to him, whatever they might be to others; and therefore he restored them to Solomon, 2Ch 8:2, which seems to be the best sense of the word.”

Day 363 - FRIDAY: February 9<sup>th</sup>

2 Chronicles 9:1 – 28, 1 Kings 10 & 2 Chronicles 1:14 – 17

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “Here we have the famous visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon's court. Sheba was located in what is today the southwestern corner of Saudi Arabia, roughly in the region occupied by Yemen, but also possibly occupying territory on the adjacent African coast in Ethiopia as reported in Ethiopian tradition. The ancients called the area of Yemen *Arabia Felix*, “Happy Arabia,” because of its healthful climate and its riches in gold, incense, precious stones and spices. That the Queen of Sheba would hear of Solomon is evidence of the briskness of trade between Sheba and Israel, much of which was doubtless carried on through Solomon's southern fleet. Mention of the "ships of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir" (1 Kings 10:11), has been taken to indicate that the fabled land was located on Africa's eastern coast. There *is* a phonetic similarity between Ophir and Africa. Others have speculated that it was further south—in southern Africa—while still others have identified it with India or even the Americas (in the latter case noting a similarity between the words

Ophir and Pirua, the first Incan dynasty from which the country of Peru ultimately derives its name).

The vast wealth of Solomon is attributed to his far-flung trading empire. Not only did wealth pour in from the eastern desert traders, the Arabian traders and the governors of subject satellite nations, but on top of that Solomon's annual inflow of gold bullion was 666 talents (more than 125,000 pounds, with a current value of more than U.S. \$500 million). Where did Solomon get all this gold? Ophir was a major source, but so was Tarshish, a Phoenician port in southern Spain. It was to this western port that Jonah was trying to escape when he set sail on a ship from Joppa.

This section of Scripture also notes that Solomon obtained horses and chariots from Egypt and other places. Again, this fact points to an amicable if not military alliance between Egypt and Israel, for chariots were the high-tech weaponry of the day. No doubt the alliance with Israel provided Egypt with a strong and secure ally to the north, well able to prevent incursions into Egypt from Syria and Mesopotamia. But militarizing Israel in this way was contrary to God's will—for, as He decreed through Moses in Deuteronomy 17:16-17, Israel's king was not to multiply horses (i.e., an army) nor wives (i.e., a harem, the tokens of alliances with foreign nations), nor silver and gold to himself. Though Solomon did all three, God was patient and gave him space to repent. The repentance, however, never came—unless the book of Ecclesiastes was written after a very late repentance, as many speculate.” [END]

2 Chronicles 9:

Verse 1 – The NKJV states that Queen of Sheba had a great “retinue”. This word means “a force”. Here it’s used to mean she had a lot of people, a company, with her.

Day 364 - SATURDAY: February 10<sup>th</sup>

1 Kings 4, Psalm 72 & Psalm 127

Daily Deep Dive:

1 Kings 4:

The UCG reading program states: "Solomon has a special group of district officers who arrange for food for the king and his large and growing household (see 1 Kings 11:3). Two of these district officers become part of the family by marrying Solomon's daughters (1 Kings 4:11; 1 Kings 4:15). "The provisions described here would have fed some 4,000 to 5,000 people though some estimates run as many as 14,000! The figures suggest Solomon developed a large, complex bureaucracy, and the land was wealthy enough to support it" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verses 20-23).

Solomon's wisdom is not confined to discernment in judgment. He is also known throughout the world of his day for his proverbs and songs, a number of which are preserved as part of the Scriptures. And he develops a keen knowledge in the sciences: "To say that Solomon 'named' (1 Kings 4:33, NIV, 'described') plants and animals means that he mastered zoology and biology" (note on verses 29-34). He also gets involved in building projects, some of which we will read about in the next few chapters, and others which are described in Ecclesiastes (2:4-6).

With the peaceful reign of Solomon underway, Judah and Israel flourish with population growth and good times. The general peace and prosperity brought about by God were a type of conditions the whole world will experience when Jesus Christ returns and rules the earth (1 Kings 4:20-25; see Micah 4:4)." [END]

Verse 29 – This verse tells us that God gave Solomon “largeness of heart”. Albert Barnes states “What we call “great capacity.”

The JFB commentary states: “that is, high powers of mind, great capacity for receiving, as well as aptitude for communicating knowledge.”

The Cambridge Bible commentary adds: “By this is meant a comprehensive powerful mind capable of grasping the knowledge of many and difficult subjects; poetry, philosophy, natural history in its various branches; he was master of them all.”

Psalm 72:

The UCG reading program states: “Psalm 72 is the last psalm in Book II of the Psalter. At its end appear the words, “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended”—apparently closing the collection of David's psalms in Books I and II as of the time this note was appended. (Other psalms of David do appear in later books.)

Psalm 72 concerns the reign of a succeeding “king...the king's son” (verse 1). The superscription says “Of Solomon,” which could mean, as with Psalm 127 (the only other psalm bearing his name), that Solomon wrote it. Yet, because of the appended note about the prayers of David, many feel that David wrote Psalm 72 *about* or *for* Solomon. The Greek Septuagint translation has *eis*, meaning “to” or “for.” As pointed out in the Beyond Today Bible Commentary's introduction to Psalms, it *could* be that Solomon wrote it prior to David's death and that David included it in his own collection—or it could just as well be that, following David's death, Solomon appended his own psalm to the end of the collection of his father's psalms. The Protestant Reformer John Calvin argued that David gave the substance of Psalm 72 in a spoken prayer before his death and that Solomon afterward set it down in the form of a psalm, composing the poetry and music himself (see *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, footnote on verse 1). It would thus be a prayer of David but a psalm of Solomon.



In any case, Psalm 72 was probably also used by the nation as a prayer for later kings in David's line. Yet it should be clear from reading this remarkable psalm that it is not the reign of Solomon or any merely human king that is primarily in view here. Rather, Psalm 72 concerns the reign of the ultimate Son of David, who is also the Son of the Almighty King, God. As *The Nelson Study Bible* comments, "This psalm is intensely messianic, speaking in ideal terms of the coming of the great King...who will establish this glorious reign" (note on Psalm 72).

Indeed, as pointed out in prior comments, we should notice again a most interesting pattern of arrangement in Book II of the Psalter. Book II begins with a cluster of lamenting prayers to God for help against enemies (Psalms 42-44), figurative of the suffering of Jesus Christ at His first coming, followed by a psalm about the Messiah's marriage to His Bride at the beginning of His glorious reign at His second coming (Psalm 45). Likewise, the book ends with a cluster of lamenting pleas for God's help against enemies, which expressly relate to the Messiah's sufferings in His first coming (Psalms 69-71), followed by a psalm that portrays Christ's majestic reign when He comes again (Psalm 72). Realize also that David himself, whose grief in the lamenting psalms foreshadowed Christ's own, will himself be raised to rule with Christ as king over Israel at that time. Moreover, all Christ's followers should also see in these psalms that our own suffering for His sake today will be followed by our future glory when we are at last raised to reign with Him in His Kingdom.

Verse 3 says that during the King's reign the mountains and hills will bring forth peace by righteousness. On one level this may concern productivity. The Hebrew word for peace, *shalom*, means more than absence of war. It concerns perfect contentment and happiness and may connote prosperity. Mountains and hills are not typically fertile areas, but blessing will flow even from them (compare Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13). Yet mountains and hills can also be figurative of great and small

nations—and that may be intended here as well, considering the universal reign of this King, as later described. The verse would then entail all peoples learning God's way, resulting in world peace. The reign of Solomon, whose name meant peace, was a time of peace and prosperity—yet it was only a small foretaste of the peace and prosperity of the Kingdom to come.

The King will be *feared*—denoting "an expression of wonder, awe, reverence, worship, and obedience" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on Psalm 72:5-7)—and this for as long as the sun and moon exist, throughout all generations (verse 5). Righteousness and abundant peace would flourish during His reign "until the moon is no more" (verse 7). Clearly this did not concern merely Solomon's earthly reign. Again, the Kingdom of the immortal Messiah is primarily intended. The Messiah's coming is as the gentle rains to bring forth righteousness and peace (verse 6; compare Hosea 6:3; Hosea 10:12; Isaiah 55:10-11). Isaiah states, "Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end" (Hosea 9:7).

The King's dominion, Psalm 72:8 tells us, will extend "from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth." The expression "the River" typically denotes the Euphrates River, the northern boundary God promised for the Promised Land—as it was during Solomon's reign. "Sea to sea" might then appear to represent the east-west boundaries of the land of Israel—from the Dead to the Mediterranean Sea. However, since the dominion extends *to the ends of the earth*, "sea to sea" could have a much broader meaning. Solomon did experience the royalty of other lands, including Sheba, presenting him with gifts, as described in verse 10 (see also verse 15). But He did not experience the fulfillment of verse 11, which says that all kings would fall down before the Great King and that all nations would serve Him. This will only happen following the return of Jesus Christ.

Verses 12-14 expand on the important theme introduced in verses 2 and 4—bringing justice to the lowly and needy, saving them from those who oppress them. Indeed verse 12 seems to imply that this is part of the reason nations will choose to serve Him. "The little word ['for' at the beginning of verse 12] directs our look back at the prediction, 'All kings will bow down to Him' (v. 11). What makes the rule of this king so special? Simply that he is dedicated to save the needy and rescue the oppressed. He has God's own compassion and the power to act on others' behalf. These verses forever change our notion of 'rule.' The central issue of rule is not the power to use others, but the willingness to serve them" (Lawrence Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*, note on verses 12-14).

The statement "precious is their blood in His sight" (verse 14) does not mean the King desires their deaths. Just the opposite, this phrase should be seen as the reason that He saves people from violence, as mentioned immediately before in the verse. Their blood is what sustains their lives (Leviticus 17:14), and it is their lives that are precious to Him (for similar wording, see 2 Kings 1:13-14). In short, the King will not look on human life as cheap—as so many cruel despots throughout history have done. Rather, He values it very highly. And violence will be eliminated during the rule of His Kingdom (Isaiah 11:9).

In Psalm 72:17, the mention of all peoples being blessed through Him "recalls the promise to Abraham (see Genesis 12:3; Genesis 22:18) and suggests that it will be fulfilled through the royal son of David—ultimately the Messiah" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on Psalm 72:17).

Verses 18-19 were probably added to the psalm a closing doxology (expression of praise) when Book II of the Psalter was completed. And the "prayers of David" note in verse 20, as already mentioned, was probably also appended at that time." [END]

## Psalm 127:

The UCG reading program states: "Psalm 127, the central psalm of the songs of ascents, is one of only two psalms with Solomon's name in the title (the other being Psalm 72). As the second song of ascents in the third set of three, Psalm 127 is one of trust in God--acknowledging Him as the source of security and posterity. The key word here is the thrice-repeated "vain" (verses 1-2)--showing the futility of life apart from God. "It reminded the pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem that all of life's securities and blessings are gifts from God rather than their own achievements (see Deuteronomy 28:1-14 [compare 8:10-18])" (*Zondervan NIV Study Bible*, note on Psalm 127).

The building of the house in verse 1 perhaps calls to mind the work that Solomon did on building God's house--the temple--as well as his own house or royal palace and other great building projects in Jerusalem and throughout the land of Israel. Yet the meaning of "house" here could also signify a family--on which the latter part of the psalm concentrates. It could even mean a *nation*--a family grown large--such as the whole house of Israel or house of Judah. Moreover, God had promised David an enduring house--meaning his royal dynasty, Solomon himself being the first successor. In building a house of any sort, the idea is to provide shelter or protection, promote community or family within and ensure perpetuity. Yet without God's involvement, such building is ultimately wasted effort--for only He can give true and lasting security, belonging and permanence.

If God is not the One doing the safeguarding, as verse 1 shows in the example of city watchmen, there is no guarantee of safety.

Furthermore, apart from God, working from early morning to late at night to make ends meet is an uncertain venture--the earned sustenance being accompanied by the anguish of life's worries.

Conversely, God's vigilant care for His people who trust Him frees them

from restlessness and allows them the blessing of peaceful slumber (verse 2; Psalm 128:2; compare Matthew 6:28-34).

God is the One who perpetuates home and family--through His overseeing care and, as related in the song's second stanza, through the miracle of childbirth. Children are, in fact, His gifts--an inheritance and blessing from Him (Psalm 127:3; compare Psalm 128:3). They build and bring joy to a family, they help with family responsibilities, they guard against loneliness and abandonment in old age, they perpetuate and bring honor to the family name. "In ancient times, having many children was regarded as a symbol of strength. This was particularly true in an agricultural economy, since the extra hands of children increased the productivity of the farmer" ( *Nelson Study Bible*, note on verses 3-5). A man with a large family enjoyed a measure of respect and recognition among his peers. When citizens met at the city gates to discuss business, such a man was not ashamed to speak his mind--even to enemies, who would think twice before acting against a person with a large family, fearing his many defenders against accusations, an increased possibility of retribution and the perceived evidence of God's favor (verse 5).

The blessing of family, a theme carried over into the next psalm, is an important focus of the annual festivals of God, during which the songs of ascent were sung. For not only do the feasts look forward to the redemption and restoration of the family of Israel and that of all mankind (which truly is one great family), but this is all part of God's plan of building His *spiritual* family--an eternal inheritance in which we may all share." [END]

Verse 2 – John Gill commentary states: “A description of an industrious and laborious person, who takes great pains to get a livelihood, or increase his substance; see Psa 104:23; which, yet, as in the former instances, depends upon the blessing of divine Providence, Pro 10:4.

For, after all, it may come to nothing more at last than “to eat the bread of sorrows”; that is, to eat bread gotten with much sorrow and labour; such get bread, and that is all, and not that without the providence of God; “for so he gives his beloved sleep”; that is, the Lord: such who are partakers of his grace, that fear and love him; to them, thus diligent and industrious, he gives not only bread to eat, but sleep, which to a labouring man is sweet; and having food and raiment, he gives them contentment, quietness, and satisfaction of mind, which is the greatest blessing of all.” [END]