

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

1 Kings 4, Psalm 72 & Psalm 127

1 Kings 4:1-34 NKJV

So King Solomon was king over all Israel. And these were his officials: Azariah the son of Zadok, the priest; Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder; Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, over the army; Zadok and Abiathar, the priests; Azariah the son of Nathan, over the officers; Zabud the son of Nathan, a priest and the king's friend; Ahishar, over the household; and Adoniram the son of Abda, over the labor force. And Solomon had twelve governors over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each one made provision for one month of the year. These are their names: Ben-Hur, in the mountains of Ephraim; Ben-Deker, in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon Beth Hanan; Ben-Hesed, in Arubboth; to him belonged Sochoh and all the land of Hephher; Ben-Abinadab, in all the regions of Dor; he had Taphath the daughter of Solomon as wife; Baana the son of Ahilud, in Taanach, Megiddo, and all Beth Shean, which is beside Zaretan below Jezreel, from Beth Shean to Abel Meholah, as far as the other side of Jokneam; Ben-Geber, in Ramoth Gilead; to him belonged the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, in Gilead; to him also belonged the region of Argob in Bashan—sixty large cities with walls and bronze gate-bars; Ahinadab the son of Iddo, in Mahanaim; Ahimaaz, in Naphtali; he also took Basemath the daughter of Solomon as wife; Baanah the son of Hushai, in Asher and Aloth; Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar; Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin; Geber the son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, in the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan. He was the only governor who was in the land. Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing. So Solomon reigned

over all kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life. Now Solomon's provision for one day was thirty kors of fine flour, sixty kors of meal, ten fatted oxen, twenty oxen from the pastures, and one hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl. For he had dominion over all the region on this side of the River from Tiphseh even to Gaza, namely over all the kings on this side of the River; and he had peace on every side all around him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon. Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. And these governors, each man in his month, provided food for King Solomon and for all who came to King Solomon's table. There was no lack in their supply. They also brought barley and straw to the proper place, for the horses and steeds, each man according to his charge. And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men—than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand and five. Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

### Psalms 72:1-20 NKJV

A Psalm Of Solomon. Give the king Your judgments, O God, And Your righteousness to the king's Son. He will judge Your people with righteousness, And Your poor with justice. The mountains

will bring peace to the people, And the little hills, by righteousness. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, And will break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear You As long as the sun and moon endure, Throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, Like showers that water the earth. In His days the righteous shall flourish, And abundance of peace, Until the moon is no more. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, And His enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles Will bring presents; The kings of Sheba and Seba Will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; All nations shall serve Him. For He will deliver the needy when he cries, The poor also, and him who has no helper. He will spare the poor and needy, And will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; And precious shall be their blood in His sight. And He shall live; And the gold of Sheba will be given to Him; Prayer also will be made for Him continually, And daily He shall be praised. There will be an abundance of grain in the earth, On the top of the mountains; Its fruit shall wave like Lebanon; And those of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him; All nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

Psalms 127:1-5 NKJV

A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon. Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep. Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

### **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]