

The Lord Appears to Solomon; Solomon Strengthens the Kingdom

1 Kings 9

1 Kings 9 – *“And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD and the king’s house, and all Solomon’s desire which he wanted to do, that the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. And the LORD said to him, ‘have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, ‘You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.’ But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, ‘Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?’ Then they will answer, ‘Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them.’”*

Now it happened at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD and the king’s house (Hiram the king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress and gold, as much as he desired), that King Solomon then gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. Then Hiram went from Tyre to see the cities that Solomon had given him, but they did not please him. So he said, “What kind of cities are these which you have given me, my brother?” And he called them the land of Cabul, as they are to this day. Then Hiram sent the king 120 talents of gold.

And this is the reason for the labor force which King Solomon raised: to build the house of the LORD, his own house, the Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. (Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer and burned it with fire, had killed the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and had given it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon’s wife.) And Solomon built Gezer, Lower Beth Horon, Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, ^{all} the storage cities that Solomon had, cities for his chariots and cities for his cavalry, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

All the people who were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not of the children of Israel— that is, their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the children of Israel had not been able to destroy completely—from these Solomon raised forced labor, as it is to this day. But of the children of Israel Solomon made no forced laborers, because they were men of war and his servants: his officers, his captains, commanders of his

chariots, and his cavalry. Others were chiefs of the officials who were over Solomon's work: five hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people who did the work. But Pharaoh's daughter came up from the City of David to her house that Solomon had built for her. Then he built the Millo.

Now three times a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar that he had built for the LORD, and he burned incense with them on the altar that was before the LORD. So he finished the temple.

King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. Then Hiram sent his servants with the fleet, seamen who knew the sea, to work with the servants of Solomon. And they went to Ophir, and acquired 420 talents of gold from there, and brought it to King Solomon."

Background Notes

Archaeologists believe Solomon located his palace in an area of Jerusalem near the Temple. Excavations in this area have revealed a large "step stone" structure that is believed to be the "Millo" (v15 & 24). The word "Millo" literally means "landfill," and this stone structure served as a retaining wall for ground that supported the royal buildings. Furthermore, there is a section of wall on the east side of the Old City of Jerusalem that archaeologists believe dates back to Solomon's time. This supports the mention of the wall of Jerusalem in verse 15.

Archaeology has also confirmed building activity at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer around the Solomon's time (v15). In fact, the triple-chamber gates at the fortress cities of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer are all similar in construction. This supports the fact that all these city gates and their walls were strengthened during and after the reign of King Solomon. In support of verse 26, archaeology has shown that there was building activity at Ezion Geber (present-day Elat) at the northern tip of the Red Sea's Gulf of Aqaba.

Verse 11 says that Hiram, King of Tyre, gave lumber and gold to King Solomon, and Solomon gave Hiram 20 cities in Galilee. Most likely these cities were put up as security for the gold that Solomon was borrowing from King Hiram. In any case, Hiram was not pleased with these cities, because he called them Cabul, or "good for nothing"!

One more background note. Verse 28 says Solomon's servants went to Ophir, where they acquired 420 talents of gold and brought it to King Solomon. 420 talents of gold – that's **16 tons** of gold! That's a lot of gold!! I'm sure you'd like to know where Ophir is so you can dig around there and see if there's any gold left - right? I'm so sorry! We don't know where Ophir was. Maybe Arabia, maybe Africa, maybe India. Good luck!

Doctrinal Points

1. God's promises are unconditional and conditional.

Verse 2 tells us that the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time. Back in 1 Kings 3 the Lord appeared to Solomon and told him that he could ask for anything he wanted. Solomon chose wisdom, and God was pleased. Now the Lord appeared to him a second time, and made promises to Solomon and the nation of Israel in response to Solomon's great prayer at the time of the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings 8).

The Lord promised that His eye and His heart would continually be focused on the **place** and the **purpose** of the Temple (v3). God's intent was for His name and presence to be always in the midst of His people. Notice two things about this promise:

- a. It was unconditional - no strings attached.
- b. It doesn't say that Solomon's Temple would exist forever - in fact, verse 7 tells us that Solomon's temple would be destroyed.

How do we put these points together? We can be sure that the Jewish people and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem are still close to God's heart. His eye is on that people group and that special place, even though there is no Temple in Jerusalem now. But there will be in the future! There are many prophetic passages of Scripture that indicate the Temple will be rebuilt. The name of the Lord will yet be glorified in the nation of Israel!

So verse 3 is an **unconditional** promise to Israel, even though no Temple is there now. This promise should not be "spiritualized" by saying the Church is the "new Israel" or the "new Temple." No! This unconditional promise was for Solomon and the nation of Israel.

However, a **conditional** promise begins in verse 4. Solomon was told that if he and his sons would walk obediently before the Lord, God would continue His uninterrupted blessing on the nation. But if they were to turn away from following the Lord and serve other gods, Israel would be cut off from the Land and the Temple will be destroyed. Sadly, all this came true because of God's promise was conditional on Israel's obedience.

But - the story is not over yet because of the **unconditional** promise in verse 3! Romans 11:25 says that blindness has come upon Israel *"until the full number of the Gentiles has come in."* In the future, before the Lord returns to this earth, there will be a spiritual revival in Israel. The promises of God are unconditional, as well as conditional.

This is true in our lives. For example, **God's promise of salvation to all true believers is unconditional.** Once you are in God's family, the relationship is never broken. You're there unconditionally! The Lord says that He will never cast out

anyone who comes in (John 6:37). But **God's promise of fellowship with the believer is conditional**. Hebrews 12 says that God must discipline His wayward children. Our close fellowship with the Lord depends on walking obediently with the Lord. So a believer's relationship with the Lord is unconditional, but a believer's fellowship with the Lord is conditional. The promises of God are both unconditional and conditional.

2. Man's disobedience is tolerated, but not overlooked!

Solomon was not a perfect king. Yes, he sacrificed to the Lord three times a year (v25), but he disobeyed the Lord in a number of areas. For example, even if the twenty cities of Galilee that Solomon gave Hiram (v11) were only given as collateral, this was not a good decision. He was giving away part of God's Promised Land, and that could lead to all kinds of problems.

And Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter (v16). This was obviously done for political purposes - but it was still wrong. God had told His people that they were **not** to intermarry with the surrounding pagan peoples.

Then Solomon built cities for his chariots and cities for his cavalry (v19). This was in direct violation of God's Law. Deuteronomy 17:16 says that the kings of Israel were not to acquire great numbers of horses for themselves. They were to depend on the Lord for security. All these sins led to further departure from the Lord, as we'll see.

So how do we explain the fact that Solomon's kingdom prospered, and that Israel reached its greatest glory under King Solomon? Answer: it was because of God's patience and longsuffering. The Lord tolerated Solomon's wrongdoing, but **He did not overlook it**. In fact, the rest of the story will show that Solomon reaped what he had sown.

This is still true today. Even though a wayward believer is prosperous and seems to be any problem-free, that is not a sign of God's approval. God's discipline is not always immediate. Man's disobedience is tolerated for a time – **but it is not overlooked!**

Practical Application

Will people scoff at the Lord because of you?

The Lord said that if Solomon and his sons did not walk with the Lord, the result would be that people would scoff at the Lord's Land and the Lord's House (v8). It happened then, and it happens today as well. Think of the mockery and ridicule that takes place when a Christian is involved in a financial scandal or an extramarital affair. (And don't think it can't happen in your life!)

Let this question be a warning. Will people scoff at the Lord because of you?