



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

1 KINGS 12-22 &
2 CHRONICLES

Week 4

Standing on the Promises—Again!

DAY 22

2 Chronicles 6:1-11

Have you ever seen or participated in a dedication ceremony for a building, ship or other project? Did the thing that was dedicated “live up to” the ideals put forth in the ceremony?

1. Whom does Solomon address first in his solemn invocation (vs. 1-3)?

2. What was the first word out of Solomon’s mouth in this important lead-in to prayer (vs. 4)?

3. Israel is on the verge of something new and great. How does Solomon place this new direction against the backdrop of God’s relationship with Israel across time (vs. 5-6)?

4. Verses 7-10 lead to one of the main themes of the book of Chronicles and of Israel’s experiences with God. What is it (v. 10)?

5. What other important item is highlighted (v. 11)? The Ark symbolized God’s power and presence, but it also reminded Israel of the standards required of them in the covenant relationship. What was written on the stone tablets (Dt 10:4)?

1. Have you considered rededicating yourself—as a temple—to the service and worship of God?

*The **invocation** is the formal opening part of a worship service or special occasion. It is a request for God’s blessing and turns the attention of the worshippers from themselves, the creatures, to reflect on the majesty of God the Creator. It leads worshippers in a direction and often makes a specific request of the promise-keeping God. Prayer is possible because of God’s own wonderful attributes—his goodness, his faithfulness and his love.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

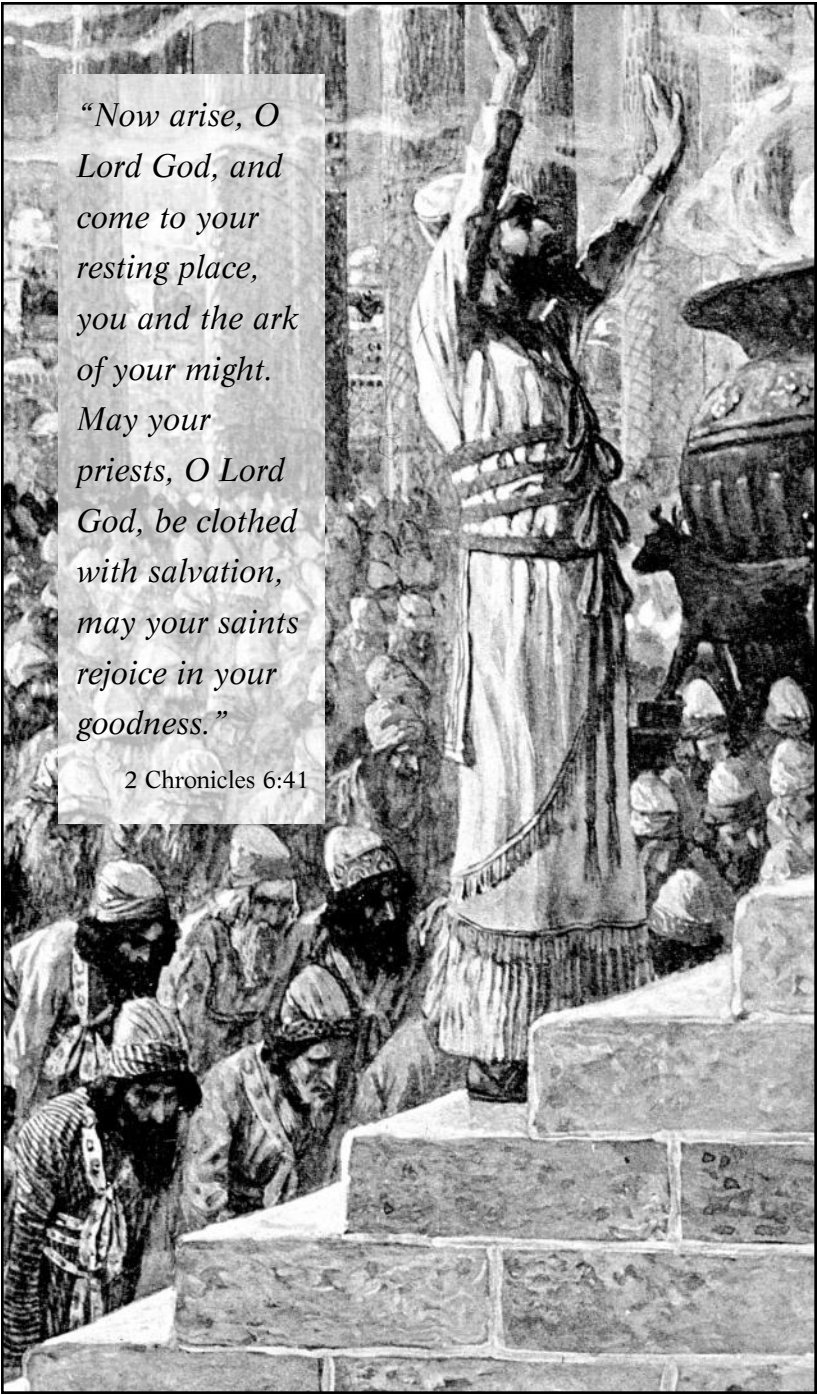
into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word



*“Now arise, O
Lord God, and
come to your
resting place,
you and the ark
of your might.
May your
priests, O Lord
God, be clothed
with salvation,
may your saints
rejoice in your
goodness.”*

2 Chronicles 6:41

The Great Promise Keeper

DAY 23

2 Chronicles 6:12-21

How important do you think it is to engage in communal prayer?

1. What physical position did Solomon assume during this prayer (vs. 12-13)?
2. What great character-trait of God does Solomon emphasize by repetition in verses 14 and 15?
3. Was the promise of a perpetual throne for David's house conditional (vs. 16-17)?
4. Does verse 18 sound a note of humility?
5. What requests does Solomon make in his prayer (vs. 19-21)?

1. Have you ever been asked to lead in a public prayer? What are the first things that come to mind when you pray?
2. Are there any points mentioned in this chapter that might help to change your approach to prayer?
3. Why not offer a simple prayer of thanksgiving right where you are, right now?

*Richard Foster, in his book, Celebration of Discipline, offers this observation about **prayer**: "We must never wait until we feel like praying before we pray...Prayer is like any other work; we may not feel like working, but once we have been at it for a bit, we begin to feel like working. In the same way our prayer muscles need to be limbered up a bit and once the blood-flow of intercession begins, we will find that we feel like praying."*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

A Prayer About Prayer

2 Chronicles 6:22-42

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you had a dramatic answer to prayer in your life? Did you thank God for it?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Does a strong sense of God's justice and fairness undergird Solomon's initial requests (vs. 22-23)?
2. What three national disasters or afflictions does Solomon intercede for next (vs. 24-31)? Does he expect that Israel will seek God in prayer during these times (vs. 24, 26, 29)?
3. Can only Israelites pray to God? Who else is included (vs. 32-33)?
4. The New Testament says to come boldly before the throne of grace. With what other great attribute of God does Solomon close his prayer (vs. 40-42)?

LIVING
out the Word

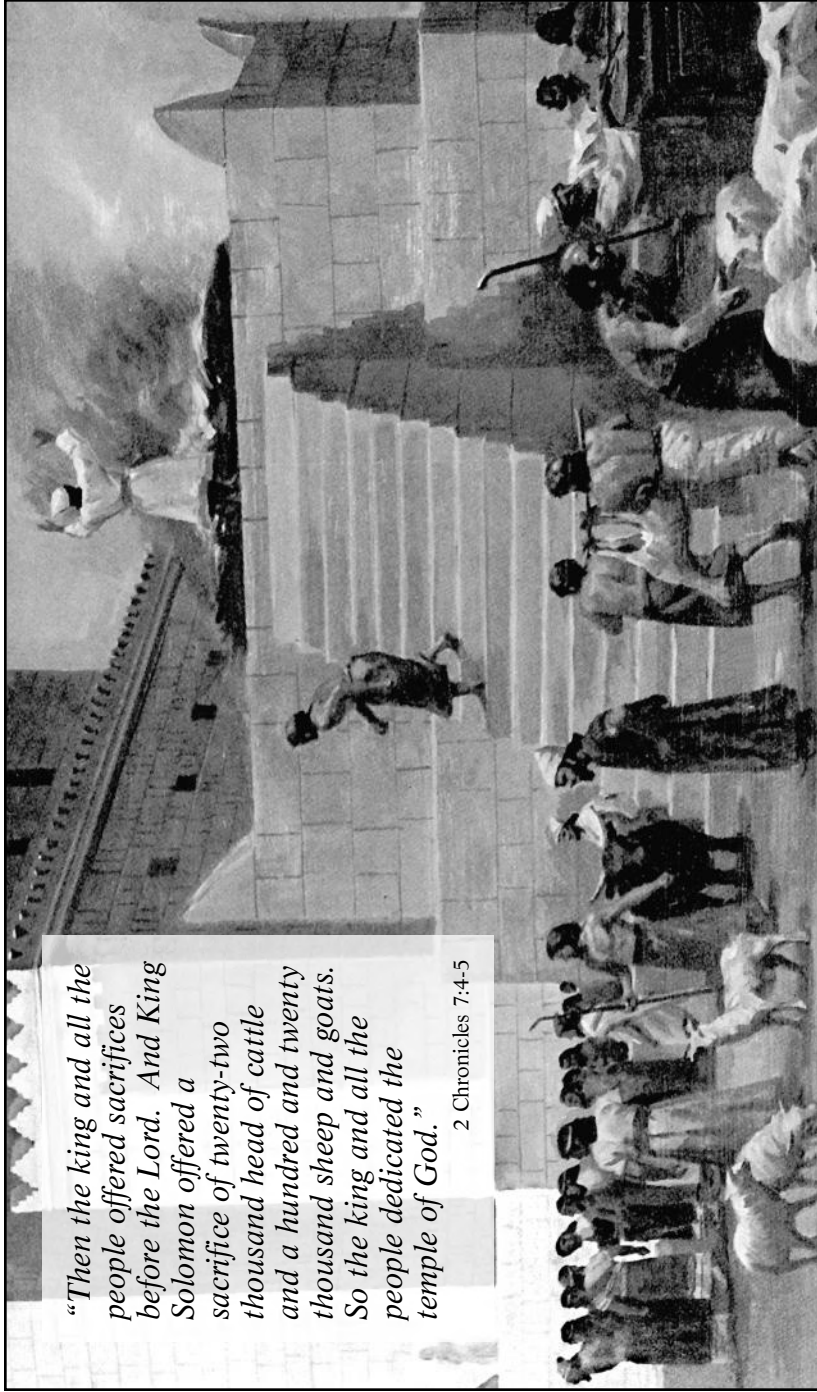
1. "Thank God for God" is a prayer often expressed by men and women across history. People who pray know that (a) there is a God and (b) he answers prayer. But how do you answer people who say, "I prayed, but nothing happened"?
2. Richard Foster writes, "Of all the spiritual disciplines, prayer is the most central because it ushers us into communion with the Father." Do you agree?
3. Some people ask why they should pray when God knows everything anyway. Prayer, however, is one way God the Holy Spirit conforms our human will to be more in harmony with God's plan. Prayer energizes the pray-er. What other reasons are there to pray?

WINDOW
on the Word

Four elements are often found in prayers: (1) praise and thanksgiving, (2) confession and intercession, (3) supplication and (4) rededication. Praise should normally go first. Walter Brueggemann wrote: "Praise is not only a human requirement and a human need, it is also a human delight. We have a resilient hunger to move beyond self, to return our energy and worth to the One from whom it has been granted. In our return to that One, we find our deepest joy. That is what it means to 'glorify God and enjoy God forever'" (Walter Brueggemann, *Israel's Praise*, page 1).

“Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the Lord. And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand head of cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and twenty thousand goats. So the king and all the people dedicated the temple of God.”

2 Chronicles 7:4-5



Great Balls of Fire!

2 Chronicles 7:1-10

OPENING
up to the Word

Do you find it easier to be emotionally stirred in a large crowd? Is that good or bad?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. God's glory filled the Temple in 5:13. What happened in answer to Solomon's prayer (vs. 1-3)?
2. The fire was a token of God's approval and also a reminder that God would meet his people here. How did Solomon and the priests and Levites respond to this sign (vs. 4-6)?
3. God rejoices in generous attitudes. How do we know the people gave generously (v. 7)?
4. What words are used to describe the effect these special ceremonies had on the people of God (v. 10)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. It has been said that because Christian worship can be conducted anytime and anywhere, that it tends toward the private, the individualistic and sometimes the bland. Do you agree?
2. Do you think this passage is suggesting that the worship of God is better when practiced with all the pomp and ceremony a large group of people can provide?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The **glory of the Lord** mentioned in these passages is a biblical term relating to the revealing of God's presence to human beings, often accompanied by dramatic physical signs. At the Exodus the glory of the Lord was shown in the cloud that led Israel. The cloud rested on Mount Sinai and there Moses experienced God's presence more directly (Ex 24:15-18). The glory of the Lord could also appear at the time of sacrifice (Lev 9:6, 23). The inspired prophets were given visions of God's glory (Isa 6:1-4; Eze 1:28). The New Testament opens with a display of God's glory appearing to the shepherds at the birth of Christ (Lk 2:9-14) and is linked with his second coming (Mk 8:38). Christians experience God's glory as well. The glory of Jesus Christ is reflected to the world by believers (2Co 4:3-6) and is activated by the believer's experience in and through Jesus Christ (2Co 3:7-11).*

Promises! Promises!

DAY 26

2 Chronicles 7:11-22

Have you kept a promise recently? Have you broken one? Have people broken their word to you? How did it make you feel?

1. Was God pleased with Solomon's prayer (vs. 11-12)?
2. What did God bind himself to do for the people (vs. 13-16)?
3. Did he reconfirm the promise of David's dynasty? Was it still conditional on obedience (vs. 17-20)?
4. Verses 21-22 must have been particularly meaningful to the Chronicler's first readers just after their release from Babylonian captivity. They had seen this Temple destroyed. Can you summarize in one sentence "the moral of the story"?

1. The promise of David's enduring throne added continuity and context to the long history of the Old Testament people of God. It encouraged the sometimes forlorn pilgrims to whom the Chronicler is writing. What are your favorite promises from God's word?
2. Was Jesus Christ the ultimate fulfillment of the promises made to David (Lk 1:29-33; Ac 13:32-37)?
3. God keeps his promises even across millennia. His word is good. How about yours?

*According to many Old Testament scholars the narrative sections of Scripture are essentially **narratives of hope**. "The overriding substance of this literature is a promise from God that is open-ended in its scope and definitions and is brought to fulfillment only by the fidelity of God. The substance of the promise is variously an heir, a great name, a new land, a community of blessing among the nations" (Walter Brueggemann, Hope Within History, page 73).*

OPENING

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DIGGING

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LIVING

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WINDOW

on the Word

The Man Who Had Everything

2 Chronicles 8:1-17

OPENING
up to the Word

How many wealthy men or women have you known? Did they seem to be happy?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Wise rulers make sure their nation is secure from attack. What items here refer to Solomon's military preparations (vs. 1-6)?
2. The Chronicler takes pains to tell us that Solomon did not enslave fellow-Israelites for the work projects (vs. 7-10). This might be because the issue was not clearly stated in 1 Kings 5:13-14 in spite of the clarification of 1 Kings 9:20-22.
3. Did Solomon consider sacrifices, praise and singing as important as David did (vs. 12-15)?
4. How much gold did Solomon receive from his overseas ventures (vs. 16-18)? A talent is about 66 pounds (30kg.).

LIVING
out the Word

1. We often abandon projects, or procrastinate about getting started on things we should. But Solomon did everything he set out to do with regard to the Temple (v. 16). Can we learn from his example?
2. What is your evaluation of Solomon's attitude in these last eight chapters? Does he appear (a) devout, (b) devoted, (c), single-minded, (d) dutiful, (e) all of the above?

WINDOW
on the Word

*2 Chronicles 8 contains an example of what some see as **Bible contradictions**. 1 Kings 9:10-14 says that Solomon gave these northern towns to Hiram of Tyre. The Chronicler reports that "Solomon rebuilt the villages that Hiram had given him" (2Ch 8:2). One possible explanation is that Solomon agreed with Hiram—the towns were not in good shape, and took them back and renovated them.*

2 Chronicles 9:1-12

Has your town, city or place of business ever received a royal or presidential visit? What was the occasion?

1. Why did the Queen of Sheba come to visit Solomon (vs. 1-4)?
2. Was she impressed (vs. 5-7)?
3. What was her reaction (v. 8)? Jesus referred to this reaction of praise to God by this legendary non-Israelite visitor (Mt 12:42). The leading of Gentiles to God through Israel becomes a theme in Scripture. How did Luke express it (Lk 2:32)?
4. What gifts did the Queen of Sheba leave with Solomon (2Ch 9:9)? What about the presents from Hiram's naval connections (vs. 10-11)?
5. Solomon could not be outdone even in the giving of gifts (v. 12). It was customary in the ancient world (and even today) for alliances and friendship to be sealed by special gifts. Historians feel the purpose here was to formalize trading arrangements between the two rulers.

1. How important are gifts to you? Do you like giving them as well as receiving them?
2. The Queen was impressed by Solomon's wisdom (v. 3). Wisdom to the Hebrews had a practical connotation as well as philosophical overtones. It often referred to "know-how" and the ability to get things done. How did Solomon exemplify this trait?

***The land of Sheba** was most likely the territory controlled by the Sabaeans in southwestern Arabia. This strategic location allowed the Sabaeans to control access to the trade routes of East Africa, Saudi Arabia and India. Oases at Mecca, Medina and Tema allowed caravan access to Israel and Palestine. Jewish historians interpret Ophir as India, but it more likely refers to coastal areas around Somalia and parts of Saudi Arabia.*

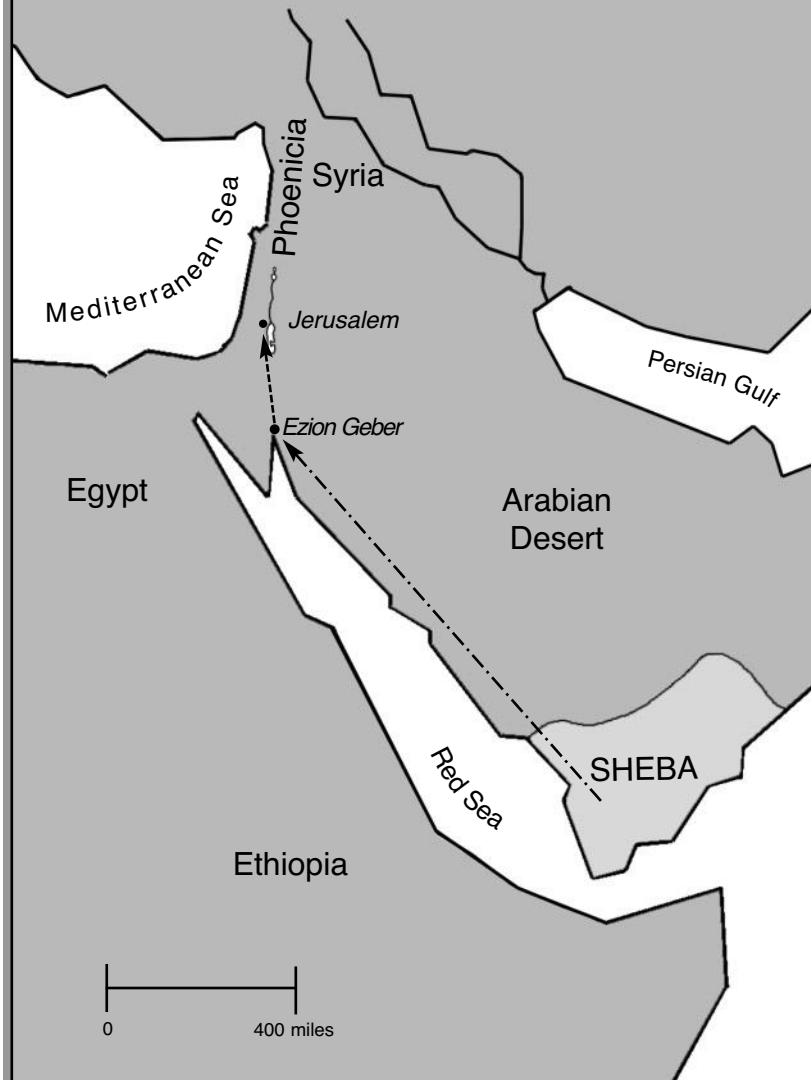
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Possible route of the Queen of Sheba to Jerusalem to test the reports she had heard about Solomon. Her findings exceeded what she had been told (2Ch 9:1-6).



2 Chronicles 9:13-21

Do you follow the economic news in the local newspapers? How important is the state of the economy to you and your career?

1. What was the base figure for Solomon's gross national product (vs. 13-14)?
2. What contrast between precious metals does the Chronicler use to drive home the unparalleled wealth of Solomon (v. 20)?
3. Hiram's navy returned to Solomon's port on the Gulf of Aqaba every three years. What items of cargo indicate an African destination for the fleet (v. 21)?

It is difficult not to be impressed by what Jesus alluded to as "Solomon in all his splendor" (Mt 6:29). The Chronicler, true to his theme, shows that the king's wealth benefited the nation as well (2Ch 1:15). Why is this important to the audience he is trying to reach?

*Chronicles reminds us that there is always **more than one way to look at a subject**, even such an important subject as Solomon (Mt 7:1-2). The comments of Old Testament scholar John Goldingay shed light on the Chronicler's worthy themes and purposes: "Chronicles is one of the later Old Testament books, and it shares a knowledge of many parts of the Old Testament ... The tension with these should not be exaggerated, but they do manifest differences in emphasis. Chronicles' contribution is to affirm that all is not an enigma (as Job and Ecclesiastes indicate some were inclined to believe); nor, as [schools overemphasizing future prophecy] might imply, has God absented himself from history until some hoped-for moment when he will break into it again. He can be known in the Temple and its worship, and he is to be trusted and obeyed in everyday life in the confident hope that his gracious lordship will be known in the community's experience" (New Bible Dictionary: Third Edition, page 186).*

OPENING

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DIGGING

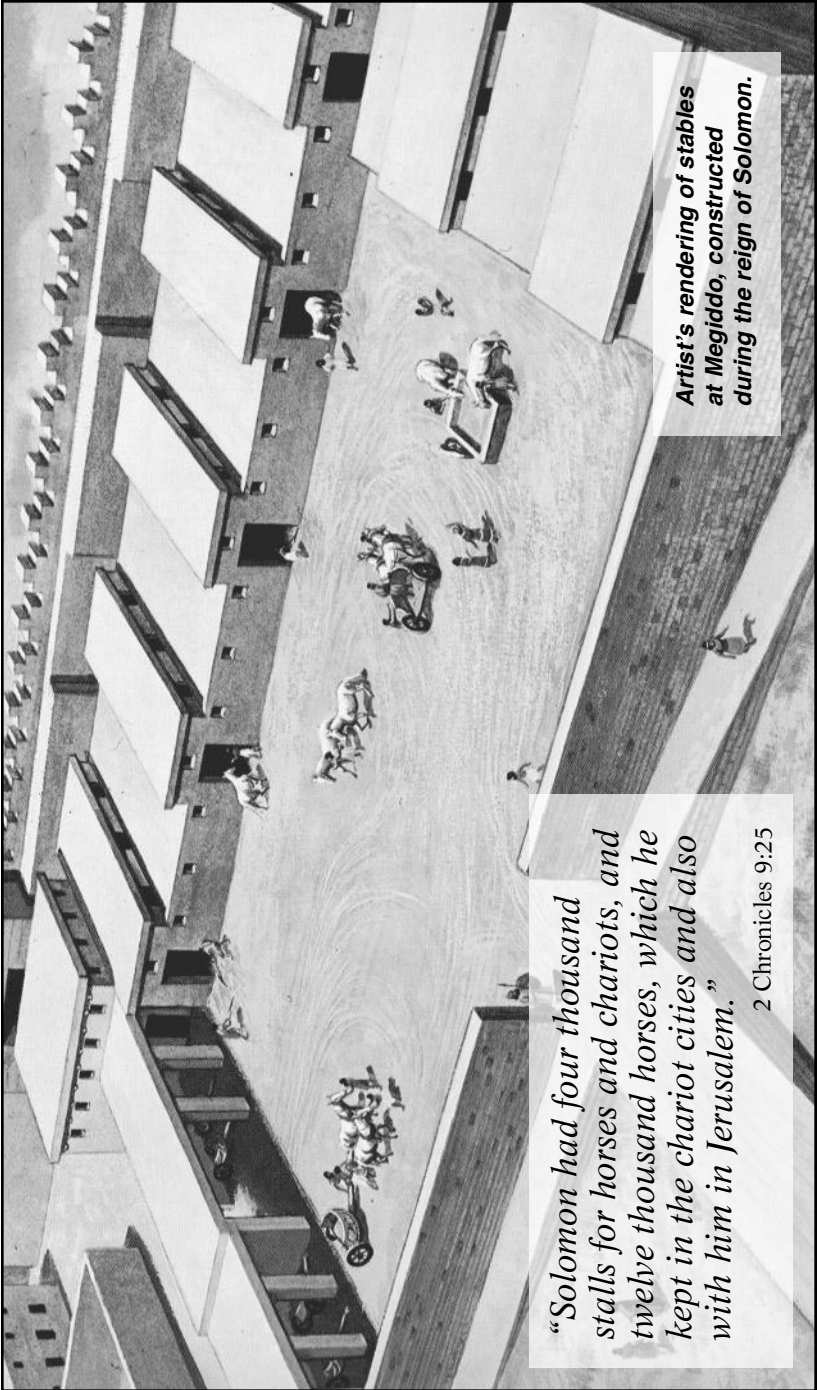
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“Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem.”

2 Chronicles 9:25

Artist's rendering of stables at Megiddo, constructed during the reign of Solomon.

Wisdom=Peace and Prosperity

DAY 30

2 Chronicles 9:22-31

Do you know people who are quick to ascribe their success in life to God? Are you one of them?

1. Why was Solomon so sought after by other kings (vs. 22-23)? Was it his wealth, or wisdom?
 2. What gifts did the embassies send to Jerusalem (v. 24)?
 3. Where were the borders of Solomon's kingdom (vs. 25-28)? Was this the same territory God had promised to Abraham centuries before (Ge 15:18)?
 4. Note that at the end of this chapter, Solomon is again linked with his father David (2Ch 9:29-31) showing the continuity of Israel's history.
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1. Israel experienced peace under the reign of Solomon. How did the author of Kings express this peace and prosperity (1Ki 4:25)?
 2. "May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem, may you live to see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel" (Ps 128:5-6). This typifies old covenant promises. But what better things are promised under the new covenant (Jn 1; 1Pe 1:3-5)? By Whom are these greater promises confirmed (Heb 8:6)?
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Solomon's chariot forces have been documented by archaeological evidence. All three "chariot cities" were in the territory that would soon belong to the northern tribes. Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer would become strategic spots for the new nation that would form after Solomon's death—the breakaway House of Israel. Mentioning this at the end of Solomon's reign perhaps introduces a jarring note into the story of Solomon and points to the divisions and civil wars ahead.

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