

1 Kings 5

We continue to see how Solomon rules the kingdom that God has set him over.

Solomon is far from a perfect human which makes an examination of his life quite encouraging.

He is clearly a recipient of God's grace. He is a bright spot in the history of Israel and yet still prone to human failure.

Ultimately, the reign of Solomon directs the reader to search for a more perfect King who is found in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

This chapter corresponds roughly with 2 Chronicles 2 and recounts the continued political maneuvering of Solomon and his preparation to build God's temple in Jerusalem.

V.1-12 The King of Tyre, Hiram, sends emissaries to Solomon as an act of good-will and Solomon develops that relationship, validating the existing treaty between the two nations.

“Hiram...entered into an alliance with David, and assisted him in building his palace by sending him able workmen, and also cedar-trees and fir-trees from Lebanon (2Sa 5:11; 1Ch 14:1). After the death of David he entered into a similar alliance with Solomon, and assisted him greatly in building the temple (1Ki 5:1; 9:11; 2Ch 2:3).” (Easton’s Bible Dictionary)

As Israel is becoming firmly established in the land that God has given them, they are also beginning to formalize political relationships with other nations around them.

We see that to be the case in chapter 3 as well when Solomon established a treaty between Israel and their one time captors, the Egyptians, by marrying one of Pharaoh's daughters.

Tyre/Sidon - quite a well developed area that existed into Jesus’ day - that in fact Jesus visited.

“...an ancient Phoenician city...20 [miles] south of Sidon. Sidon was the oldest Phoenician city, but Tyre had a longer and more illustrious history. "Tyrian merchants were the first who ventured

to navigate the Mediterranean waters; and they founded their colonies on the coasts and neighbouring islands of the Aegean Sea, in Greece, on the northern coast of Africa, at Carthage and other places, in Sicily and Corsica, in Spain...(Easton's Bible Dictionary)

“The purple dye of Tyre had a worldwide celebrity on account of the durability of its beautiful tints, and its manufacture proved a source of abundant wealth to the inhabitants of that city.’...Both Tyre and Sidon "were crowded with glass-shops, dyeing and weaving establishments; and among their cunning workmen not the least important class were those who were celebrated for the engraving of precious stones." (2Ch 2:7,14). The wickedness and idolatry of this city are frequently denounced by the prophets, and its final destruction predicted (Isa 23:1; Jer 25:22; Eze 26; 28:1-19; Amo 1:9,10; Zec 9:2-4).” (International Bible Encyclopedia)

It is written that King Hiram always loved King David.

It is a little puzzling to consider these kinds of relationships between God's people and people who worship other gods.

Though it shouldn't be...we live this life probably daily, but sometimes we are appalled that other believers have relationships with unbelievers.

There is a tension here that must be considered. On the one hand these are times where God's people share their faith and hope with unbelievers; on the other hand God warned His people against too close of associations with other nations because of their susceptibility to worship their gods!

So while we may want to applaud these as evangelistic relationships, the unfortunate thing is that all too often people overestimate their own spiritual fitness and get pulled away to worshipping the very things that they once professed to hate.

[Deu 7:1-6 NKJV] 1 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, 2 "and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them [and] utterly destroy them. You shall make no

covenant with them nor show mercy to them. 3 "Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. 4 "For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. 5 "But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their [sacred] pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. 6 "For you [are] a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

There is an identifiable cycle of failure that is really a common characteristic of Israel's history.

The cycle appears to be: being favored by God, recognizing that favor, drawing close to Him, seeing the nations around them, desiring to be like them, swinging hard toward worldly relationships, and other gods, failing, restarting, and on and on goes that cycle.

And in many ways this looks like the spiritual life-cycle of many people today.

It would be over reach to say that we should never have relationships with unbelievers. We should be actively engaging all of those people whom God puts in our path for His kingdom. But, it is prudent to reflect on Paul's words to the Corinthians: [1Co 10:12 NKJV] 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

We don't want to retreat into dead monasticism, withdrawn from the world we are supposed to reach.

We also shouldn't live in fear that our church-clothes are going to be besmirched by some "yucky" person.

After all, Jesus' own ministry was characterized by associating with those who were deemed as undesirable

[Luk 5:30-32 NKJV] 30 And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" 31 Jesus answered and

said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 "I have not come to call [the] righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Consider too that at this time Solomon is blessed with divine wisdom from God. While the nations around Israel leave much to be desired in the realm of truth, spiritual purity, or righteousness; God will direct their ways according to His will for the benefit of His kingdom. He is sovereign over all - directing the path of all creation according to His perfect will.

As Solomon cozies up to Hiram he refers to God, meaning the God of David, as "his [David's] God." We should take special note of that. Solomon knows that the LORD God, Jehovah, is not necessarily Hiram's God.

One thing I appreciate about biblical literature is the nuance when it comes to the spiritual state; even as Solomon personalized the LORD as David's God, the God whom David worshipped.

This has important ramifications for us today. The term “god” is quite a universal term whether or not we capitalize the first letter. That term simply refers to any deity.

Today when we speak of God to others we take for granted that we are all on the same page, each of us understanding that we are referring to the God of the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The god who says about Himself: [Isa 43:10-11 NKJV] ...Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. 11 I, [even] I, [am] the LORD, And besides Me [there is] no savior.

But we live in an age where people believe that all roads lead to this generic universal being that we call God. It is not so!

This isn't unique. The nations around Israel also serve a multitude of deities, and were rarely compelled to take the God of the Israelites more seriously than their own false gods - figments of their imagination or demonic beings, opposed to the one true God.

The God we worship is very personal. He is our God individually and collectively. That's one thing that makes our faith special - the Father cares for us individually and is building us up collectively. He doesn't stand far off, indifferent to us, but is near to us, among us by His Spirit and His Word.

[Jhn 20:17 NKJV] 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and [to] My God and your God.' "

Solomon makes mention that his father David was disqualified from building the temple.

We must remember that this is because of his bloodiness and sin, not because he was too busy.

[1Ch 22:6-11 NKJV] 6 Then he called for his son Solomon, and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. 7 And David said to Solomon: "My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house to the name of the LORD my God; 8 "but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood

and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight. 9 'Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. 10 'He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son, and I [will be] his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.' 11 "Now, my son, may the LORD be with you; and may you prosper, and build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said to you.

In a contemporary sense this is clearly about Solomon. But, in a prophetic sense this points to the root and offspring of David, Jesus, who is building a house for God another way - a way in which we are participants presently.

V.7 Hiram blesses the LORD - why? How is it that people can pay lip-service to this without actually believing or following?

Perhaps this response is meant to be a customary acknowledgement of Solomon's faith or perhaps protocol demands that Hiram respond in such a way. We do not see that

Hiram was particularly hostile toward the LORD. There is also no indication that Hiram was especially devoted to the LORD.

There are many today who share Hiram's attitude. They are happy to support from a distance, even happy to share in the language of the faith by saying things like: I'll pray for you, or thank God, or some other thing.

Hiram's acknowledgment of God, even in a positive sense, wasn't enough to move His own kingdom into a right relationship with the living God.

This can be said of so many today who are clinging to their own kingdom all while paying lip-service to the God of the Bible.

[Joe 3:4-5 NKJV] 4 "Indeed, what have you to do with Me, O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia?

[Zec 9:1-4 NKJV] 1 The burden of the word of the LORD Against the land of Hadrach, And Damascus its resting place (For the eyes of men And all the tribes of Israel Are on the LORD); 2 Also [against] Hamath, [which] borders on it, And [against] Tyre and

Sidon, though they are very wise. 3 For Tyre built herself a tower,
Heaped up silver like the dust, And gold like the mire of the
streets. 4 Behold, the Lord will cast her out; He will destroy her
power in the sea, And she will be devoured by fire.

Lip-service isn't enough. The core of belief is what matters. No
amount of money, supplies, wood, assistance, friendliness, etc.
will be enough for Tyre to reconcile with God in their sin.

This is true today too - even as Solomon made treaties with the
unbelieving nations, even as he was a wise steward of the
resources God provided, even though these nations were
ostensibly "allies" with God's people - that didn't make them God's
people.

Are there people like this in our lives? Allies to the church?
People who are kind towards the faith but altogether outside of
the covenant?

This is so important! If we love them we should ensure that we
have done everything we can to bring them into the new
covenant.

“If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to Hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.” (Spurgeon)

I'm reminded that “friendship with the world is enmity with God,” (James 4:4) AND we are to balance that notion with Jesus' instructions on faithfully using unrighteous riches.

[Luk 16:10-11 NLT] 10 "If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. 11 And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?

Remember Jesus did not pray that we would be taken out of the world but that we would be kept from the evil one. (John 17:15)

As it was with Solomon so it is with our generation, we live in a world surrounded by other nations, other peoples, those who worship other gods.

This is not the idyllic kingdom and yet the one true God is moving all things according to His divine purpose. As a matter of fact, God is building His temple among us.

Let us first consider Solomon's preparation for the Temple and see how it informs our understanding of God.

V.13-18 Israel's labor force - preparing to build the Temple.

This was a massive undertaking and required massive amounts of resources: time, money, people and materials.

However, God doesn't occupy a building. As Paul puts it in Acts 17:

[Act 17:24-25 NKJV] 24 "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.

This is a sentiment first set forth by Solomon himself in 1 Kings 8.

We should take care not to devalue the Temple too much. It was important and commanded by God.

It was supposed to be something that honored God, a very physical, visible reminder of God's presence with His people.

It was designed to provoke people to think about the nature and character of their heavenly Father who spoke all things into being, who longs to be near His creation, and who longs for us to be mindful of Him.

The studies through the various instruments within the Temple and the priestly offices and the rooms are all designed and directed by God to reveal certain truths about who He is or the work He has done or is doing.

There is a more complete way though. By Jesus, the Root and the Offspring of David, God is building up a house OF His people - a temple unto Himself wherein we are the stones fit together for Him.

[Eph 2:19-22 NKJV] 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner[stone], 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Over the millenia God has been building His own temple by His people. The foundation of which, Paul tells the Ephesians, is the apostles and prophets. We take that to mean God's Holy Word. And, the chief cornerstone, that most important stone that binds together the building, is Jesus Christ.

So sure is this fact that Peter also records it for us:

[1Pe 2:4-7 NKJV] 4 Coming to Him [as to] a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God [and] precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God

through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." 7 Therefore, to you who believe, [He is] precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,"

To the Apostles and Prophets the intent of the Temple in Jerusalem was clear - to demonstrate God's plan for His people that He would in time construct a more glorious temple for Himself. We are part of that - to His glory.