

1 Kings 9-10 - Ominous Signs

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I've entitled the study tonight, Ominous Signs. The reason I've done that is because we begin to see in these two chapters that we're going to be looking at tonight, some signs that Solomon was heading downward in his walk with the Lord. And this is a very, very difficult thing to see. And it's also a very difficult thing to watch, but it's a difficult thing also to recognize in someone's life. How do you know when someone is beginning to wane in their passion for the Lord and their walk with God?

It happens. You know, I know. What are some of the signs, what are some of the dangers that we see along the way? And I think, obviously, when somebody begins to withdraw from fellowship, that's an obvious sign. And you can usually start to figure out some of the excuses that people make that really don't hold water, but they'll make them anyway. You talk to them; they begin to break fellowship and they're not coming to church as much as they used to, they're not fellowshipping in other places the way they used to.

You talk to them about it, and they'll say ridiculous things like, well, you don't need four walls to worship God. We all know that. There's no great revelation there, but usually what that is something of a smoke screen to deflect what's really, truly going on, and that is that the person really doesn't want to be there, and it could be for a myriad of reasons. There's a lot of different things that can play into it. I heard a guy down at the senior pastors conference who got up in front of us all and was talking about counseling.

And this applies because if you're talking to somebody about the Lord and their walk with God beginning to hit the skids, you may be in a place where the Lord would have you offer up some counsel. You may not consider yourself a counselor. I don't either, but we certainly do offer counsel from time to time. And one of the things he said is it's related to just when people having issues when their life is just messing up, for lack of a better term, is he said, I always look for where their heart is and what their idol is.

I try to find their idols; try to find what they're worshiping. Just ask questions and figure out from them, what is your idol? What is the thing you're living for? And once you get past the veneer that Christians love to again, throw up in front of you to try to deflect your questions, and you get beyond that and you begin to

find out what's really going on, you can find out a lot of things. What we're going to see here in 1 Kings chapters 9 and 10 is getting past the veneer of religiosity to seeing what's going on in Solomon's life that's going to bring him ultimately toward the end of his life to a place where he is going to fall away from the Lord.

Now, whether or not Solomon returned into relationship with the Lord, honestly, we don't really know. All we know is that toward the end of his life, it really began to take a turn for the worse. And it says here in 1 Kings chapter 9, verse 1, That,

“As soon as Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD and the king's house (And that means his own palace) and all that Solomon desired to build, ² the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. ³ And the LORD said to him, “I have heard your prayer and your plea, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.

⁴ And as for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, with integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you, and keeping my statutes and my rules, ⁵ then I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, ‘You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.’ (But then the Lord gives this very important warning)⁶ But if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them,

⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated (or set apart) for my name I will cast out of my sight, and Israel will become a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ⁸ And this house will become a heap of ruins. Everyone passing by it will be astonished and will hiss, and they will say, ‘Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?’ ⁹ Then they will say, ‘Because they abandoned the Lord their God who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt and laid hold on other gods and worshiped them and served them. Therefore, the Lord has brought all this disaster on them.’”

¹⁰ At the end of twenty years, in which Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king's house, ¹¹ and Hiram king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress timber and gold, as much as he desired, King Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. ¹² But when Hiram

came from Tyre to see the cities that Solomon had given him, they did not please him.¹³ Therefore he said, "What kind of cities are these that you have given me, my brother?" So, they are called the land of Cabul to this day." (ESV)

And Cabul is not specifically a word in the Hebrew, but what they would often do is they would use words that sounded like words. And in this case Cabul sounds like the Hebrew for, good for nothing. And what Hiram is saying is these are good for nothing. And he tells Solomon so, and he actually referred to it as the land of good for nothing. And it tells us in verse 14 that *"Hiram had sent to the king 120 talents of gold."* Which we assume was the cost of the cities.

Now what we're going to see as we get a little bit further into this is, we're going to see just how much gold Solomon had. And you'll remember something about what God had said to the kings of Israel, do not amass much gold. He also said, don't have a lot of horses, because that was equivalent to military power. And then He said, and don't have many wives. And you guys remember me saying Solomon did all these things. And it's interesting how these things impact the flesh on three very important levels.

You have the lust of the eyes, you have the lust of the flesh, and you have the pride of life. And those are the three areas where Satan tempts. Those are the three areas where all sin is seen. Sin is not seen outside any of those three areas. And so, if the enemy is going to attack, it's going to be one of those. It's going to be something related to your pride and you're standing with other people. Or it's going to be related to a temptation of the eye. Something that you see, and you want. Or it's going to be a temptation of the flesh. A lust of the flesh. Something that you desire in your flesh.

And Solomon, we see, is just embracing all of those things. And now, what do we see? Here's a man, Hiram, who, for 20 years now, well, actually it's been longer than that. Hiram has been a friend of Israel for a long time. He was a friend of David's. And when David passed away, Hiram sent his condolences. And now he's been a friend of Solomon, and he's provided a great deal of timber from the area of Lebanon for the building of the temple and the building of the palace, and they've got this relationship that is going on between the two of them.

It's a good relationship. But here now after 20 years, we see something interesting in Solomon. It says that Hiram gives him some money, and he, Solomon, gives Hiram these cities in the area of Galilee, and when Hiram

finally sets out to go look at them, he comes to them and he says, what is this? What is this? What have you given me? And what we begin to see in Solomon is just that love of things, and that unwillingness to let go of something that is more beautiful. I want to hang on to all the good stuff. I'm willing to let go of the bad stuff.

It's funny, it happens from time to time, but it doesn't happen much anymore, frankly. But in the early days of our fellowship, when there were needs that we couldn't meet ourselves sometimes people would offer to give us things. But I've got to be honest with you, sometimes it was their throwaways. Hey, we have this TV we want to give you guys, and they were about ready to put it in the trash, but we're going to give it to the Lord. And there's something about that you've got to be careful about.

I mean, are you willing to offer to the Lord your first and your best? Or is there a stinginess to just how you see your belongings? And this is what we're beginning to see in Solomon, a stinginess. And by the way, I didn't relate that story to say that we need things and please give us that because we don't, we're very well taken care of, and God is gracious and faithful. And I share it as just a reminder. But there, we have to be careful about how we see our possessions.

Now, I've told you guys before that under the New Covenant, everything you have belongs to the Lord. Everything. 100%. under the New Covenant, you really don't own any possessions. You own nothing. You've been given stewardship over things. Your house, your vehicles, your money, and the resources that you have. You've been given stewardship over those things. But we know that God is going to call you to account for what you did with those things.

How do we begin to respond when people need something or want something or when we're going to give something away? What's our attitude? We're beginning to see this thing here in, in Solomon. Oh, this sounds great. I'm giving all these cities to Hiram and so forth, but they're good for nothing. It goes on and finishes out the chapter here. Verse 15 and following, saying that,

“And this is the account of the forced labor that King Solomon drafted to build the house of the Lord and his own house and the Millo (your Bible may say terraces or support terraces) and the wall of Jerusalem and Hazer and Megiddo and Gezer ¹⁶ (Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and captured Gezer and burned it with fire, and had killed the Canaanites who lived in the city, and had given it as dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife; ¹⁷ so Solomon rebuilt Gezer) and Lower Beth-horon

18 and Baalath and Tamar in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, 19 and all the store cities that Solomon had, and the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion."

What is the writer doing here in this chapter? What's he making you aware of? Isn't he showing you, isn't he, isn't this the writer's way of showing off Solomon's wealth? He needs a whole city to store his chariots, and then he has another whole city just to store his horses. He needs a whole town! And it says that he builds up. Now, he's willing to give away things he doesn't really think are worth much to him. But these other things that are worth something to him, he builds up, he invests in, and he holds all of his goods in those places.

And it says that he built - that everything he desired, anything he wanted, Solomon got. How would you like that sort of a, we dream about that, don't we? We dream about like either winning the lotto or some dumb thing happening and we all of a sudden are just filthy rich, and then we can have anything we want, anything we desire. And we dream about those sorts of things. What would I buy if I had all the money in the world?

Well, Solomon had all the money in the world. I mean, he just, he had more money than he could possibly spend in a lifetime and probably more than a lifetime. And he just, anything he wanted. Anything. He did not withhold anything from himself. We know that actually also from the Book of Ecclesiastes. He actually took his wisdom along with him and indulged in just about every aspect of pleasure that the world offers, and he wrote about it. It's interesting that his final conclusion after doing that, after literally having everything and enjoying everything, he said it's all vanity.

It's all a chasing after the wind. It's meaningless. And yet, what do we find out that he did with his life? He ran after all those things. Which tells you too, that just because you know and understand that something is meaningless, doesn't necessarily mean you're going to stay away from it. Right? Because the flesh is strong, and it will overpower even wisdom. The wisdom of Solomon was overpowered. You think Solomon didn't understand what he was doing? You think he didn't have a cognizant understanding of what he was getting into?

We're going to get into these, we're not going to get into it tonight, but in the next couple of chapters that we deal with, we begin to see the significant fall of Solomon, and we're going to find out the specifics of that fall, but what we're seeing now are signs of the fall. These are those ominous signs that there is an attitude that is ungodly, and it begins with the love of things, and covetousness,

and unwillingness to part from things that are important to me or valuable to me.

Oh, I'll give away things that aren't considered of any value but I'm going to hang on very closely, very tightly to the things that I want, that I want to maintain and so forth. These are the attitudes that can really begin to communicate where our heart is. And we'll look at some Scriptures related to these things in just a little bit. Verse 20.

“All the people who were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, who were not of the people of Israel (and these were the people that Israel did not unseat from the land) — ²¹ their descendants who were left after them in the land, whom the people of Israel were unable to devote to destruction—these Solomon drafted to be slaves, and so they are to this day. ²² But of the people of Israel Solomon made no slaves. They were the soldiers, they were his officials, his commanders, his captains, his chariot commanders and his horsemen.

²³ (Now) *These were the chief officers who were over Solomon's work: 550 who had charge of the people who carried on the work. ²⁴ But Pharaoh's daughter went up from the city of David to her own house that Solomon had built for her. Then he built the Millo. (Again, or your Bible may say supporting terraces) ²⁵ Three times a year Solomon used to offer up burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar that he built to the Lord, making offerings with it before the Lord. So, he finished the house.”*

And that statement there in verse 25 is also, I think, an important one to see in this passage as well. And that is the fact that even while we're seeing these ominous signs of Solomon's departure from the things of the Lord in a heart toward the Lord. What's he doing? He's still offering sacrifices to God. He's still offering burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar that he built to the Lord, and he does it three times a year. Do you know what that's referred to as when we're not walking with the Lord as we ought?

Euphemistically referred to as like a moral mouthwash. And it's referred to that because it helps us at least to have a sense that I'm doing something acceptable to God. And it takes that bad taste that's in our mouth that would otherwise communicate to you and I, things aren't good and you really need to repent, and you need to get your life right with God. So, what do we do when God says repent? Do we repent? No, we'll just give something away. We'll offer some sacrifices, that'll make me feel better. Maybe there's some poor people down the street or there's a family that I heard about that's having a hard time.

We're going to write out a check and give it to them. Go over and knock on their door and hand them an envelope and say, here you go, we just really felt led of the Lord to give you this. God bless you. How can we be praying for you? And all this is going on, and yet in the heart there's a departure happening. A separating of relationship between the person and God but they're making themselves to feel better by doing something good. And maybe they've been staying away from church for a while. So, you know what? I'm going to go to church. You'd be surprised how many people go to church as a moral mouthwash.

I haven't been to church lately, haven't been living the way I should. God's been knocking on my door trying to get me to repent with the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Well, but instead of really repenting, I'm just going to go to church, and I'm going to lift my hands, and I'm going to close my eyes during worship, and I'm going to have my Bible open, and I'm going to be nodding and smiling when the pastor goes through the passage and teaches it, and I'm going to shake a few hands when I'm done, and I'm even going to go up to the pastor afterwards and say that was a great message.

And then I'm going to feel better. And I'm going to go home and it's going to be okay. And I'm going to go back and do what I was doing before, but I'm at least going to feel a little bit better about myself. That's a moral mouthwash. Just take a little bit of morality and swash it around and spit it out. Ah, that tastes a little bit better than what I've been, than that taste I had in my mouth of a relationship from the Lord that isn't even close to what it used to be, and an attitude concerning the things of the Lord that isn't even close to biblically what it ought to be.

We do those sorts of things, and we need to know that we do those sorts of things, and eventually, the nation of Israel is going to get so good at it that God is going to speak through the prophets and He's going to say through men like Isaiah and others, He's going to say, stop it. Stop bringing these meaningless offerings to me. Who told you to bring all these animals to me? He's going to say. He's going to say, stop tearing your garments and tear your hearts instead.

When people would sit and pray, they would put on a show of religiosity over the terrible things that the nation had done, and they would tear their garment, rend their garments as a sign of their grief. And it began to be as nothing more than a religious activity rather than a genuine response to God. They would get up and, oh, and people, they'd rip their garments and others watching, oh, look at that. And God would say, don't tear your clothes anymore.

Break your heart! Come to me with an open and responsive heart and stop playing church! Come to me with a sincere heart. We've been through 1 and 2 Samuel, you guys know about David's life. Was David a stellar, perfectly moral man? Heaven's no! What was he? He was a man who responded to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. And that's the stuff he would say to the Lord. A broken and contrite heart, God that you won't despise.

All this other religiosity, all this other stuff that we do - go into church, open my Bible, raise my hands, close my, all this, if the heart isn't there and I'm just using it as a means of washing the taste of my sinful life and my cold heart out of my mouth, then it's a waste of time and it's not doing any good for anyone. So, we see it going on in Solomon's life. There's these things that are warning signs, ominous signs, and yet he's still worshiping the Lord. Verse 26 says,

“King Solomon built a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber, which is near Eloth on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. ²⁷ And Hiram sent with the fleet his servants, seamen who were familiar with the sea, together with the servants of Solomon. (So they teamed up on some maritime excursions) ²⁸ And they went to Ophir and brought from there gold, 420 talents, (because King Solomon didn't have enough gold. He needed some more) and they brought it to King Solomon.

This is crazy. I mean this is that period of time in Solomon's life where he doesn't have enough time left on this earth to begin to spend all that he has, and he creates a fleet of sailing ships so as to go and get more gold. With that, we end out the chapter. What's really interesting, and this is one of many comments, by the way, telling us again, and the writer, the narrator, is telling us that Solomon was amassing gold. He wanted you to know that. Why did he want you to know that? Because he wanted you to see what was going on in Solomon's life.

He wanted you to take note of it. This isn't just a fact. He's not saying it because he's bragging on Solomon. He's not saying, boy, did that guy have a lot of gold. He's trying to communicate to you these warning signs. This man is running after gold and more gold. He's getting, he's been 20 years plus in the kingship and everybody who comes to him visits him and brings him gold. And he's going out looking for more and they're telling you this because they want you to see it. Can we see it or do we read passages like this and think, well, that's a vaguely interesting fact about Solomon.

You know what? Sometimes that's the way we respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Or when we see the warning signs in our own life, we choose not to

look at them. We just like they're just facts. Just like this. Solomon built ships and he went to Ophir, and he brought back a lot of gold. Interesting. Okay. Yeah. What's the next chapter say? No, no, no. Did you pay attention to what the chapter said? Are you paying, are we paying attention in our own lives of what's going on and so forth?

What's really interesting is that most of the warnings about wealth that we have in the Scriptures come from Proverbs. Solomon wrote most of the Proverbs, not all, but most of them. Isn't that interesting? Here's the man who amassed all this wealth and most of the warnings that we get in the Scripture concerning the dangers of money are in the Book of Proverbs. Because it's the wisdom literature. Let me show you a couple, can I? Verse 4 of chapter 23 says,

Proverbs 23:4 (ESV)

Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist.

Do not toil to acquire wealth; (Look at that) be discerning enough to desist.”

And this, written by the man who built sailing ships. To do what? Acquire wealth.

Proverbs 11:28 (ESV)

Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.

Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.

Again, a very interesting proverb, written by Solomon saying that there is a great danger when someone puts a focus on riches to the point of actually trusting in them and yet we see this amassing of wealth.

We're also reminded what Jesus had to say on the subject. Matthew chapter 19 is an interesting passage. Jesus said to His disciples, you remember this?

Matthew 19:23-24 (ESV)

And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

And Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly, I say to you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

Isn't it interesting that we know this, we see this in the Word of God, and yet we still dream about being wealthy. Fact of the matter is, compared to the rest of the world, you are. We talk about having wealth or acquiring wealth, but you know what we're doing when we do that, don't you? We're comparing our wealth with people who are filthy rich above us, and what do we say about ourselves? Well, I'm not rich. If you ask most people if they're rich, they'll go - no. And then you ask him this question, what is rich? Well, it's always well beyond where they are.

You guys realize, don't you? That if you take the whole world, and you actually do a comparison of the whole world. You do realize you're in like the top one percent of the world. You guys realize that, right? You're filthy rich compared to people living in India, or most of Africa, or a lot of other places. You are filthy rich. Interesting, isn't it? There's another Great passage from Mark chapter 12 that I want to show you here, too. It says that,

Mark 12:41-44 (ESV)

And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

And he sat down opposite the treasury (or, if you will, the offering box) and watched the people putting money into (it) the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And (along comes) a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all (isn't that incredible? Than all) those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

You know what's interesting about this story? Remember, every time Jesus opens His mouth, you're hearing from God, right? This is the heart of God expressed to you and I in the Gospels. Do you know how God feels about

money now? We don't we? We read passages like this, I know exactly how God feels about money. Money is completely relative to how much you have and how much you're willing to let go of. That's the way God sees money.

Here's this woman, she comes along, she's got these two copper coins worth about a cent, and she puts them in there, and Jesus makes the point of saying that she gave more than all the people who put large sums of money in that offering box. She put more as far as God is concerned. Now, some of those people that came along might have been doing their offering as a moral mouthwash. I need to give something to God because things aren't, maybe that'll help, and I'll feel a little bit better about myself.

They're putting in this money. How does God feel about that? Well, they're giving out of their excess. What means a lot to God? Sacrificial giving. Sacrificial giving. What do we see in Solomon in this chapter that we just read related to sacrificial giving? He's not really willing to sacrifice anything good, is he? He'll hand over 10 cities to Hiram that are basically good for nothing, but he's not going to sacrifice there. He's not going to let anything go that's worth something to him.

And then, finally from Matthew chapter 6, and another fantastic passage on the subject of money, Jesus speaking here saying,

Matthew 6:19-21 (ESV)

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For (and this is the important part right here) where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Very, very important passage. Very important conclusion to the passage. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Where's your treasure? That's the question that we all have to ask ourselves. And what we're seeing here in Solomon's life as we're beginning to see this slide of his relationship with God, we're seeing that his treasure is in something other than his walk with God. That's not where his treasure is. It's in other things. He's amassing gold. He's amassing horses, chariots, cities to even hold them all.

He's got so much gold, he doesn't know what to do with it, and he's still getting more; what he gives away, he gives away and that it's not worth anything. And what are we seeing here? Just this m.o., this attitude. that expresses that I'm hanging on to these things of the earth because that's where my treasure is. I'm treasuring these things. Okay.

Chapter 10. Chapter 9 is all about the warning sign of wealth and all that comes with the warning related to wealth. Chapter 10 is going to deal with another aspect of ominous signs.

“Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. ² She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices and very much gold (because Solomon needed more) and precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. ³ And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her.”

Do you guys remember me telling you about those three areas where all sin takes place? The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and what was the third one? Remember? The pride of life. The pride of life. Can you imagine? Just think, just put yourself in Solomons place for just a moment. Can you imagine what it's like to know everything? I mean, young boys particularly love to dream about being know-it-alls. Particularly. Girls, not so much for some reason, but boys, we'll say things will make statements when we have absolutely no facts.

We'll just say it starts around 3 years old. I remember saying things 3, 4, 5. And I said it like I had every conviction in the world. I had no idea what I was talking about, but I was pretty convincing. But he really knows everything. And he's not just impressing all of his own people now, and all the other nobles and people who come and sit and listen to him as he talks about things.

Now, here's a queen from a nearby land and she comes and has this huge following of people, and they come I'm sure with all kinds of pomp and circumstances. Royalty usually does. Probably flutes and instruments playing as she comes in, and here's Solomon. You guys remember we're going to read about this here. We're going to read about his throne. Well, I'm not going to steal it from you. We'll get to it in a second.

Let me just say it was amazing. It was awe inspiring. And you're sitting on your throne with all of your lions, statues of lions on the steps leading up to your

throne and this woman, this queen with great pomp and circumstance enters the hall and brings all these gifts of gold and jewels and things, and she says, I have heard about your wisdom, O King Solomon.

And she begins to put to him questions, difficult questions for which she has not been able to find any answers up to this point. And Solomon just starts speaking and answering all of her questions, and it says there was nothing hidden from Solomon. He, it just, out it came.

Can you imagine what that does to a human being? I mean, goodness gracious, the man is still a man! Yeah, he's got more wisdom than any man on the face of the earth, but he's still a man and he has a sinful nature and there is this thing called the pride of life that can get a hold of Solomon just like anyone else. Look at the things that go on verse 4,

“And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, (and when it says that, it means that she saw everything he did) the house that he had built, ⁵ the food of his table, (even showed his wisdom) the seating of his officials, (even was a sign of his wisdom) and the attendance of his servants, (even) their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the Lord, (it says) there was no more breath in her.”

In other words, what did we say today? Took her breath away, right? It was breathtaking. It was breathtaking to see all that this man had.

“⁶ And she said to the king, “The report was true that I heard in my own land of your words and of your wisdom, ⁷ but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it. And behold, (she says, look at this) the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity (goodness they) surpass the report that I heard. ⁸ Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! ⁹ Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel forever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness.”

Oh, how God must delight in you. Can you imagine hearing those things? It's one thing when a lowly servant comes walking up there and spills all kinds of wonderful platitudes and statements of adoration and respect, but here's a queen. She's a queen. She rules a country, and she just is gushing over this man. You are stinking amazing. I am so impressed. You know what?

I heard about you, but now that I'm here and I have heard what you said. I haven't even heard half of it. It's half again better than everything that I had heard about you.

¹⁰ “Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold, (Yep) and a very great quantity of spices and precious stones. Never again came such an abundance of spices as these that the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. ¹¹ Moreover, the fleet of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought from Ophir a very great amount of almug wood and precious stones. ¹² And the king made of the almug wood supports for the house of the Lord and for the king's house, also lyres and harps for the singers. No such almug wood has come or been seen to this day.

¹³ And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all that she desired, whatever she asked besides what was given her by the bounty of King Solomon. So she turned and went back to her own land with her servants ”

This section of the chapter ends with just this. And again, why is the narrator telling you this? Just to impress you? No, we're already duly impressed. I mean, we had the inside scoop early on in this book when God said, I'm going to give you wisdom that'll be unmatched. Hey, we were impressed at that point. I was all in at that particular point right there. I didn't need to hear all of the evidence, right? It's, we're good to go.

Why is he telling us this? So that you can see the pressure and the adulation that this man received from people. And you can see how that plays into what's going to take place in the next two chapters, when it says that his heart grew cold, and he turned away from the Lord.

These are ominous signs. These are the kinds of flattering remarks that cause people to think I am really what they think. And they start believing their own press reports. And they start, like, yeah. And when you are the king, and you're the Supreme Court, and you're the smartest man in the land who is going to argue with you?

Who is going to try to overturn your word? Nobody could do it. There is no court in the land that can overturn the voice of the king. What happens to a man with all that power and all that wisdom and all this adulation and adoration that takes place over time? What happens to a man like that? He consumes it. He embraces it. And he responds to it and says, it's true. And people start saying things like, oh how God delights in you. And we start believing, rather than David who finished off his time by remembering his days.

He said God, you took me from the sheep pen, and you made me king over all of Israel. I was the least in my family. When Samuel came to my house looking for the next king of Israel saying that it was one of the sons of Jesse, my dad didn't even bother calling me in. And when none of my brothers were chosen as the king of Israel, Samuel had to ask, Is this it? Is this all? Jesse went, well, I mean, there's David. He's out with the sheep. He probably smells terrible. We just left him outside. Samuel says bring him, get him in here. We're not going to even eat until we do this. Get the boy in here. David never forgot that. Never forgot.

And that was the difference. He never forgot who he was. You see the same attitude in the Apostle Paul when he's writing in his Epistles. He'll be talking about his previous life and he'll say, let me tell you a true statement. Here's a true statement. Jesus Christ came to save sinners, and I'm the worst one. He called himself one abnormally born. That was his term, describing himself. One abnormally born. He basically believed that he was born breech into the kingdom. Because God had to appear to him and break him into a pile of nothing and take away his eyesight in order to even get his attention.

He was so bent on destroying the kingdom of God and the people of God. And he's like, here I am. And Paul believed that his life and his ministry was a symbol of one thing and one thing only. The mercy of God. He literally saw himself as a symbol of God's mercy. He would go around telling people, you know what? Look at me. Look at my life. Now, what do you see? God's mercy, that's what you see. And then God even - but that's not to say Paul wasn't a man who couldn't get puffed up. Sure, he could! And was there a potential of Paul getting puffed up?

Yes, there was. Remember what Paul wrote to the Corinthians? 2 Corinthians. He said, I know a man couldn't even talk to himself in the first, about himself in the first person. I know a man who was taken up into the third heaven, heard things that aren't even lawful to say. I know a man like that. I'll brag about that man. I won't brag about me. And he's talking about himself. He says, you know what though? Because of the incredible things God showed me in those revelations.

He knew that he had to help me keep my feet on the ground so that I wouldn't get so conceited and so vain that I would lose sight of my God. So, what he did is he gave me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me. And he said, I don't like it. I hate it as a matter of fact, in fact, I asked God to get rid of it for me. Three times, three times I petitioned the Lord, please God, take this

out of my life. Finally, God speaks to him and says, no, Paul. It's there for a purpose.

Because of these incredible things, in order to keep you grounded, and remembering who you are, and that you are a product of my mercy. I'm going to allow these things in your life to continue, painful though they may be. And boy it worked. It worked. Paul was a man of such incredible humility. Never bragged about himself unless he was trying to make a point. In fact, when he did brag about himself and there was one time that he specifically did, he said, even then I counted all as loss.

Whatever was on my positive side, we've all got a ledger sheet for our lives, right? We've got the, that which is in the black and that which is in the red. And as a Jew, he said, I had a lot of things that were going for me. I was a Jew of Jews of the tribe of Benjamin. I was a Pharisee. And man, I was a Pharisee of Pharisees. And I did all this, and I was righteous before God in terms of how the Pharisees see righteousness. And da, da da.

He says, yet for all these things that I saw once on the black side of my ledger sheet, I now consider them as dung, as nothing for the sake of knowing Jesus Christ and His righteousness. That's what comes from that attitude of brokenness and humility that Solomon, unfortunately, didn't get. Verse 14 says,

“Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold, (that’s just a sinful amount of gold) ¹⁵ besides that which came from the explorers and from the business of the merchants, and from all the kings of the west and from the governors of the land. ¹⁶ King Solomon made 200 large shields of beaten gold; 600 shekels of gold went into each shield. (Wow!) ¹⁷ And he made 300 shields of beaten gold; three minas of gold went into each shield. And the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. ¹⁸ The king also made a great ivory throne (Here it is. I was telling you about this) and overlaid it with the finest gold.

You with this? It's ivory overlaid with gold. Does that sound like it's a little opulent to you? Just a little? Look at this though.

“¹⁹ The throne had six steps, and the throne had a round top, and on each side of the seat were armrests and two lions standing beside the armrests, ²⁰ while twelve lions stood there, one on each step (or) end of a step on the six steps. The like of it was never made in any kingdom.”

Just wow. It'd be great, wouldn't it, to just see somebody even try to remake this in the image of what he had done. To be in this ivory throne overlaid in gold with the standing lions as armrests next to my throne, standing lines like ready to, pounce probably, and I'm sure they were full size, life size. You're not going to have little kitties. That doesn't do anything. And then on each of the six steps going down, lions probably seated on it.

Here your throne is lifted up this high, glowing with the light that reflects off it because of the gold, as refracting all this light and probably sending the inside of the - all sorts of interesting light stuff all over. And you're sitting on this throne and people come before you, and what do you suppose? How do you suppose they're going to react to you? And I suppose that's going to make you feel? I think we all know. It says here that,

²¹ “All King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, (All of them, his cups and) and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None were of silver; silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon. (It was like dirt) ²² For the king had a fleet of ships of Tarshish at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the fleet of ships of Tarshish used to come (back) bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

²³ Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. ²⁴ And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. ²⁵ Every one of them brought his present, articles of silver and gold, garments, myrrh, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year. ²⁶ And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.

²⁷ And the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone, and he made cedar as plentiful as the sycamore of the Shephelah. ²⁸ And Solomon's import of horses was from Egypt and Kue, and the king's traders received them from Kue at a price.”

They were told not to do that. Don't import horses from Egypt, God said “²⁹ A chariot could be imported from Egypt for 600 shekels of silver (Oh boy. Silver is as common as dirt around our place. Let's go get some chariots. I mean, can you see what's going on here?) and a horse for 150, and so through the king's traders they were exported to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.”

All right. Two more things I want to bring up in the way of Scriptures to help us see the essence of this. And this is another interesting proverb I want to show you from Proverbs chapter 27. Let me put this on the screen for you here because I think this really says it.

Proverbs 27:21 (ESV)

The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and a man is tested by his praise.

The crucible is for silver, (What's a crucible? It's like an oven where the impurities are baked out of it) and the furnace is for gold, (How is a man tested?) and a man is tested by his praise."

By his praise, by the praise he receives. So, you really find out what's in a man. That's what this passage is saying. You find out what's in a man when you praise him. When he receives all kinds of praise. You find out what's really there, right? Great passage. And then here's a good summary passage from 1st Corinthians chapter 10. It says,

1 Corinthians 10:11-12 (ESV)

Now these things happened to them (what things?) as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

Now these things happened to them (What things? Paul is writing about the stories of the Old Testament. These things happened to them) as an example, (For who? They were for us) but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.

Why did I bring this passage? This is really the summary of these entire two chapters. Why did God give us the Old Testament? Why did He hang on to it? And why did He let us see His Old Testament characters with all their failures? Why did He do that? If I was writing a book and these were my men, and I was God, that'd scare you. I think I'd try to gloss over their bad stuff because these are my guys. Isn't that interesting God doesn't do that? He doesn't gloss over the bad. He gives us all the bad stuff. All the warts and wrinkles.

Why? They were written down for us as examples so that we could learn from them. We could grow. We could understand. These are warning signs, you guys. These are impending signs of doom. These are ominous signs of a heart

that is falling away from God. And that's what you and I are to do. And that passage that was just up on the screen, it said at the very end, *"Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall."*

And that is a very important ending to that because it helps you and I to understand that we're not going to see this thing very clearly all by ourselves. Have you ever noticed that? We have a hard time seeing our lives for what they really are and what's really going on in our hearts. We have a difficult time seeing that.

God will speak to us through His Spirit. He'll speak to us through people, through His Word, but we have a hard time just looking in the mirror and going, oh, that's yucky. We just don't do that. We're really good at making excuses, so Paul says here, if you think you're standing firm, be careful that you don't fall.

It's that time when you think you're standing firm, that you're actually more of a sitting duck for the enemy. Why? Because when you think you're standing firm, you're going to relax your devotion. I don't need to pray about that. I'm doing great. Standing firm. Standing firm for Jesus.

Let's get T-shirts. Put it right on there. Standing firm for the Lord. Yeah, he says, hey, be careful. If you think you're standing firm, you're probably in trouble because the enemy's going to look at it and go, oh, you think you're standing firm, huh?

What's the attitude that we should have? I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord. Right? Just like the hymn. I need thee every hour, every minute of every day. I need You. I need You. I look to You. I look to You as the source of my strength, my hope, my life.