

Connect360: Ready to Build

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- *Lesson 5 in the BaptistWay Press Connect360 unit “Solomon: No Ordinary Kind of Wisdom” focuses on 2 Chronicles 2:1-12.*

Even if the most skilled people on earth join together to build a house for God, can they ever succeed? King Solomon posed this question in his letter to King Hiram of Tyre (2:6). What type of house can humans build that could contain the Creator of Heaven and earth? Often times, wisdom begins by recognizing the magnitude of God. We couldn't fit God into a man-made temple any more than we could fit the wind into a keyhole, but that wasn't the point. The Temple was not about size, but about sacrifice.

When my wife and I were married, I had a lot to learn about sacrifice. This was no longer a dating relationship with a few grandiose gestures to woo her over, but a marriage that required day-by-day surrender. I learned that keeping the dishes clean and the floors swept meant much more to her than large-scale tokens of affection. Over time, I figured out love is most potent in the form of daily sacrifice.

Solomon agreed with this notion in his letter to Hiram. The Temple was to be built for three purposes, “the burning of incense of sweet spices,” “regular arrangement of the showbread,” and “burnt offerings morning and evening” (2:4). This was the ordained prescription for worship in ancient Israel, daily sacrifices and offerings.

Solomon continues his letter to Hiram asking for somebody skilled in four types of metals, three colors of fabric and three species of tree. This Temple would be no boring house of worship, but a masterpiece designed for the Master. Solomon didn't just go straight toward what was familiar either, he branched all the way out to Lebanon—no pun intended. The king

understood the value of organizing ministry, as did many biblical heroes before and after such as Moses, David and Paul. Nehemiah was so skilled at casting and organizing a vision, that he was able to rebuild the city wall in Jerusalem in a mere 52 days.

Focus on what is most important

In the midst of the logistical planning and strategy, Solomon doesn't lose focus on what is important. He honors the legacy of his father David, the previous king, by reminding Hiram it was David who provided the vast sea of workers for this project (2:7). Often times in God's kingdom, we are called to continue somebody else's work. In fact, Jesus reminds us: "I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor" (John 4:38). We are all standing on the shoulders of somebody who came before us. Our time on earth is temporary, but our work for the kingdom of God is eternal.

Solomon set the tone by reminding Hiram of the great worth of Israel's God. Because God is great, God's Temple must be great. This was not to be a dedication of Solomon's power like other kings, this was something eternal. Hiram saw right through to the heart of the king, and it caused a pagan ruler to bow down in adoration and worship.

Now let's bring this principle into the present. Our calling as followers of Christ, filled with the Spirit of God, is to walk in the wisdom in which Solomon walked, to speak with the honor in which Solomon spoke, and to call both believers and others alike to love God with their heart, mind and soul. We do this by living a life worthy of the gospel of Christ, so the people inside and outside of our circle of influence would also believe. Solomon brought those close to him into the work of God and lived his life in a way those far from him also would believe.

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