

Building that will Last?

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[0 : 00] Maybe you'd take your Bible now and turn with me to the Old Testament, to 1 Kings. We've been looking through 1 Kings in fits and starts with Phil Copeland in recent months.

And we're going to read together this evening 1 Kings chapter 9, which is quite a long chapter, not nearly as long as last week's. I've told some of you barely survived the reading last week, never mind the sermon.

But let's see how we get on here with chapter 9. And it comes after Solomon has been building the temple of the Lord and his own palace.

1 Kings 9 then at verse 1. As soon as Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord and the king's house, and all that Solomon desired to build, the Lord appeared to Solomon a second time as he had appeared to him at Gibeon.

And the Lord said to him, I've heard your prayer and your plea which you've made before me. I've consecrated this house that you have built by putting my name there forever.

[1 : 15] My eyes and my heart will be there for all time. 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 rules, 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 if you turn aside from following me, you or your children, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes that I've set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land that I have given them, and the house that I have consecrated for my name.

I will cast out of my sight. And Israel will become a proverb and a byword among the peoples. And this house will become a heap of ruins.

Everyone passing by will be astonished and will hiss, and they will say, Why has the Lord done thus to his land and to this house? And 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 worshipped them, and served them.

And therefore the Lord has brought all this disaster on them. At the end of twenty years, in which Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king's house, 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.

[3 : 08] When Hiram came from Tyre to see the cities that Solomon had given him, they did not please him. Therefore he said, What kind of cities are these that you have given me, my brother? So they had called the land of Kabul to this day.

Hiram had sent the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold. 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 millow on the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer.

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 a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.

So Solomon rebuilt Gezer, and lower Beth-horon, and Balath, and Tamar in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, 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, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, who were not of the people of Israel, their descendants, who were left after them in the land, whom the people of Israel were unable to destroy, to devote to destruction, these Solomon drafted to be slaves, and so they are to this day.

[4 : 36] 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.

These were the chief officers who were over Solomon's work, 550 who had charge of the people who carried on the work. But Pharaoh's daughter went up from the city of David to her own house that Solomon had built for her, and then he built the millow.

Three times a year, Solomon used to offer up burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar that he had built to the Lord. making offerings with it before the Lord. And so he finished the house.

King Solomon built a fleet of ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Eilat, on the south of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent with the fleet his servants, seamen, who were familiar with the sea, together with the servants of Solomon.

And they went to Ophir and brought from there gold, 420 talents, and they brought it to King Solomon.

[5 : 47] Amen. May God bless us his word. Well, please do have your Bibles open to 1 Kings 9.

How can we build up a strong and lasting church for the Lord? Well, 1 Kings 9 will help us. In this chapter, as verse 10 says, we have reached really the midpoint of Solomon's reign, which also means that Solomon is in midlife here.

And at a shallow reading, this chapter, it looks like it's made up of two completely different, unrelated sections. Verses 1 to 9, the Lord appears to Solomon in a special way, really to answer Solomon's prayer that he made in chapter 8.

But then in verse 10 to 28, we are told about these, at first glance, somewhat random events from Solomon's reign. I mean, you look at these two sections together, you think, why has the author put these here?

Has he carelessly slapped them together? Well, of course not. And actually, these two sections are linked together by one word.

[7 : 12] One word that comes up again, and again, and again, the word is built. It comes up in verse 1, verse 3, verse 10, verse 15, verse 17, verse 19, twice in verse 24, verse 25, and 26.

Also, these two main sections in verse 1 and verse 10, they both begin with references to the temple and to Solomon's own house that he built for himself.

And so friends, I take it that actually this chapter is not random, but actually it's meant to be read together carefully, and it's all about this building theme.

Well, with that in mind, I'd like to look at this chapter under three instructive headings. Here's the first thing tonight. Firstly, you build up a strong and lasting church by obeying the Lord's word.

by obeying the Lord's word. In verse 1 and 2, as soon as Solomon has finished all his building works, the Lord appeared to him for a second time at Gibeon.

[8 : 20] The first time the Lord appeared to him here was back in chapter 3 where the Lord gave him wisdom. And that was a momentous occasion. And here, we're to see that this appearing of the Lord is just as serious.

And really, the Lord appears this time to really impress upon Solomon something vital that he must do as he enters into this new era of his reign in midlife.

But before the Lord does that, he tells Solomon just how privileged he and Israel truly are. Please look at verse 3. And the Lord said to Solomon, I have heard your prayer and your plea which you have made before me.

I have consecrated this house, the temple that you have built by putting my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will be there for all time.

So last week in chapter 8, if you were here, you'll remember that Solomon asked the Lord to always have an eye and an ear on the temple. As the Lord dwells up in heaven, he's to constantly be looking down on the temple so that he will hear any of the prayers that his people make towards the temple.

[9 : 38] Well here in response, the Lord graciously comes to him and says, Yes! He assures Solomon that he really has caused his name to dwell in the temple, consecrating it, setting it apart for the use that Solomon has requested.

In other words, the Lord says to Solomon, I authorize this temple as a true means of grace for all my people. I will hear and receive their prayers made towards the temple.

What a privilege Solomon and Israel truly had. They've received more grace, grace upon grace from the Lord. And yet friends, this is not cheap grace.

this is not cheap grace. Solomon and the whole of Israel have received a glorious calling and now the Lord wants them to walk in a manner worthy of that calling.

Please look at verse 4 and 5. The Lord says, 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, keeping my statutes and my rules, then I will establish your throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, You shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.

[11 : 05] Friends, what the Lord is saying here is, Solomon, remember what the number one priority for your life is. The gift of the temple must never distract you or your people from doing the thing that I want most, which is walking by the obedience of faith.

That is, hearing the Lord's word and doing it. The Lord delights in that far more than anything else his king and his people might do for him. Friends, you see, walking by real faith is not about paying the Lord lip service.

No, walking by real faith is about trusting in the Lord for salvation, loving him for his grace, and expressing that in obedience to his word. Never, ever, never, ever, treating God's commandments like some kind of a legalistic ladder that you must climb to get into his grace.

No. Walking by the obedience of faith, it's all about seeking to do the Lord's will out of gratitude, love, thankfulness for his grace and mercy, always looking to him for the strength that we need to obey him.

The temple and all of the ceremonies that will take place in there, they must never, ever take a higher priority in Solomon's life than obeying the Lord's word.

[12 : 29] And what a promise. if Solomon obeys the Lord, his throne will be established forever. And friends, today, as the true Israel of God, the church of Jesus Christ, we are called to do exactly the same today.

The top priority for our lives every day is to walk by the obedience of faith. Not because we're wanting to climb into God's good books by some meritorious system.

No, we do it because we love the Lord, because he has saved us. And we never do that in our own strength. We always look to him for the strength that we need. Now just run your eye back over verse 4 and 5, please, again.

If you've been coming along on Sunday evenings whilst we've been looking at the book of 1 Kings, you'll think to yourself, I think I might have heard this before. And you're absolutely right. Because these verses and the message of these verses, they pop up again and again and again and again and again throughout the book repeatedly.

If 1 Kings was a beautiful piece of rock music, then this would be the main riff that comes up again and again and again. For example, in chapter 2, David's final words to Solomon are all about the importance of walking by the obedience of faith.

[13 : 48] In chapter 3 verse 6, Solomon himself speaks about how crucial it was for his father David to walk by the obedience of faith. In chapter 3 verse 14, the Lord calls on Solomon to walk by the obedience of faith.

And if he does that, the Lord would prolong his time on the throne. Then in chapter 6 verse 11 to 13, the word of the Lord comes to Solomon, probably through a prophet, and tells him, yes, this temple, I will accept it, you're building it, but remember, I want obedience.

And then here in chapter 9, again, the Lord says the same thing. Why all the repetition? Why is it repeated? Well, friends, not only because it's vitally important, but I think it's also a mercy, because the Lord repeats this point again through his book, because he knows what we're like.

Yes? He knows what we're like so often in our hearts, so often we're stubborn and hard-hearted. The Lord knows that. The Lord knows so often we are weak, frail, fickle.

And that's why again and again and again, he lovingly reminds us of this key point, the call to love him and express that in obedience. And also, friends, I do not think it's a coincidence that the Lord repeats these verses to Solomon now that he is at this time in his life when he's entered midlife.

[15 : 25] Maybe you're here this evening and I shall direct my attention over to the teenagers. It's good to see you with us. It's always great to have you on a Sunday night. But maybe, just maybe, as a teenager, as a young Christian, you're thinking to yourself, living for God, it's hard right now, but it's going to get easier when I get older.

Wrong, if that's what you're thinking. From my experience, every new stage of life which you enter into brings with it new difficulties and even more distractions.

More distractions that can take you away from prioritizing loving the Lord and obeying him and obeying his word. Friends, maybe you are here, and I'm looking over this way now, and maybe you yourself are in midlife.

Amid all of the busyness of your life, amid all of the stuff that you have to do, what are you prioritizing? Friends, I think this is a fair assessment.

I think we are a busy church full of busy people. And you know what? That is a very, very good thing. However, if we do not prioritize obeying the Lord's word in our everyday lives, then what we are building for him here will not last.

[16 : 44] The only way to build up a strong church is to have people who are obeying the Lord's word. Well, as I said, the message of verse 4 and 5, it's popped up repeatedly throughout the book.

However, there is something different here. There is something different this time. The Lord calls for obedience, and this time, for the first time in the book, it is accompanied by a warning.

And that is the second heading for this evening. You build up a strong and lasting church by heeding the Lord's warning. In verses 6 to 9, for the first time in the book, the Lord gives his king and his people a word of warning.

And again, you might ask the question, why wait? Why not say that earlier? Why wait until this point? Well, we can't be sure, but perhaps it might be that at this point in his life, Solomon's heart is already starting to slowly turn away from the Lord.

Might be, might not be. But let's look at what the Lord warns. Please look at verse 6. So before he gets to the consequences of rebellion, he tees up and describes the rebellion.

[18 : 11] Verse 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, and we'll come to the consequences in a minute.

But just notice, please, in the Hebrew, the word translated as you in verse 6 is not singular. anymore. It's plural. That means the warning of the Lord here, and indeed, I take it the call for obedience in verses 3 to 5.

It applies to the king and all the nation. And notice the specific sin that is highlighted here. Again, this is new for one and two kings.

This is the first time in the book we hear about idolatry. Turning away from the Lord in your heart to love gods that are false. We'll think more about that in a minute.

But if Solomon and the people forsake the Lord, if they reject his grace and walk by disobedience and unbelief, there will be dire consequences that are laid out plainly and clearly in verse 7 to 9.

[19 : 19] And you can summarize them under three T's. Turf, temple, throne. Let me just unpack that quickly. Firstly, turf. Verse 7 says, if they rebel and reject the Lord, they will be cut off from the promised land that the Lord had so graciously given them.

Secondly, temple. Verse 7 also says that if they reject the Lord, they will find that the temple is cast away from the Lord's sight. And verse 8, it will be reduced to nothing but rubble, a heap of ruins.

And thirdly, throne. This is not mentioned explicitly, but surely it's implied off the back of verse 4 and 5. If Israel forsake the Lord, reject his grace, love idols, walk in disobedience, then it will mean that the Davidic king will come under God's wrath and the throne will not be secure.

And when all of this happens, if this happens, and all of this sweeps over the nation like a powerful wave, the result will be that the nation will fail to be what it was redeemed to be.

That is, it will not be a shining light to the nations, showing off the beauty of the Lord and his goodness. Rather, Israel will be viewed in a different way. As verses 8 and 9 say, Israel will become an international witness to the righteous wrath of God.

[20 : 49] They will proclaim to the whole world just how foolish it is to spurn the Lord, the God who had shown them such grace and compassion. And friends, when you think about it, when you listen to these warnings, do you know, the Lord here, he is actually being incredibly kind.

You see, there's no small print with the Lord. He tells his people precisely what the price tag of infidelity will be. And really, this warning is loving because it's meant to help the people of God, true Israel, to persevere by the obedience of faith and to not run away from the Lord.

That's what these warnings are designed to do. They are a means of grace, actually. And if you think that the Lord doesn't give us today any warnings like this, well, friend, I want to ask, have you read the New Testament?

And I don't want to be cheeky there, but in the New Testament, for example, there is a whole book almost devoted to this type of thing. Hebrews. Let me read you some verses from it, written to Christians like you and I.

It says this, we must pay close attention to what we have heard, lest we drift from it. How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It goes on, take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.

[22 : 20] See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they, that is unbelieving Old Testament Israel, did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.

Can a professing believer fall away from the Lord? The Bible consistently says, don't. Don't. Friends, the great warnings that we find in the Bible, that's what they're for.

They're there as a loving message to warn us. As John Woodhouse puts it, Christian assurance does not mean denying these warnings. These warnings are the very way in which the Lord keeps his own from the terrible consequences of refusing him.

When a believer hears these warnings, the believer heeds them and acts accordingly in the strength of the Lord. And friends, thinking back to verse 6, specifically, I think this warning should make us think very carefully today about our fidelity to the Lord Jesus.

In other words, we must take idolatry seriously. What is idolatry? Is idolatry merely worshipping carved images as some people would have you believe today?

[23 : 48] Well, listen to the Heidelberg Catechism. He defines it really helpfully. It says, this idolatry is having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God who has revealed himself in his word.

That's how the Bible actually speaks of idolatry. It is anything more important to you than God or anything that you trust alongside of God. Anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God.

Anything that you look to in order to give you what only God can give. One theologian puts it like this, a false God is anything so central and essential to your life that should you lose it your life would feel hardly worth living.

An idol has a controlling position in your heart that you can spend it's so controlling in your heart that you can spend most of your passion and energy your emotional and financial resources on it without a second thought.

For example, a spouse, children, family. All these good things can be made God things.

[25 : 06] They can become idols in our lives whether we have them or not. Yes? You do not have to have something in order for it to become an idol in your heart.

Let me just touch upon that because it is a big issue in our culture today. If you are single it can be so easy to take your good God-given desire to be with someone and to let it grow and grow and grow and grow until it utterly dominates your heart.

That's when the desire is no longer good. Parents, we need to be very careful. It can be so easy to look at our children as the sole giver of our identity meaning, purpose and even future security in life.

I think a good test of whether we are making children our idols is do they dominate our diaries? Is the family diary made up of taking our kids to all sorts of extracurriculum activities?

It's quite common for parents even to relive their own lives through their own children. That's idolatrous. I think another way to tell if you've treated your kids in an idolatrous way is how have you behaved once your kids have flown the nest and grown up.

[26 : 25] If your kids have left home and if you're constantly wanting to be with them and if you actually get really bitter and deeply angry by the fact that they do not need you as much as they once did in your lives, the chances are you have treated them and you are treating them as an idol.

Other good things that could become idols in our lives include food, a career, money making, being recognised as an achiever, getting critical acclaim, having great social standing, peer approval, comfortable circumstances, competence and skill, your beauty or brains, a great political or social cause, that can also become idolatrous.

Even the pride that you take in your own morality and virtue or perhaps your understanding of the reformed faith, yes, that can even become an idol or even success in Christian ministry, even success in preaching can become idolatrous.

An idol is whatever you look at and say in your heart of hearts, if I have that, then I'll feel that my life has meaning, then I'll know value, then I'll feel significant and secure.

Friends, there are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best word to sum that up is worship. If anything becomes more fundamental to your happiness, meaning in life and identity, then you are worshipping it.

[28 : 09] We should all ask this ourselves and I will ask this myself. What things am I currently looking to in life in order to find happiness, meaning and identity? Because, friends, these are the very things that we are probably most in danger of turning into idols.

1 Kings 9 gives us a loving, a loving warning. Flee it. Repent. Now, friends, the wonderful news is, the wonderful news is, remember the one who's given this warning.

It is our God who loves us, our God who's ready and willing to give us all the strength that we need to turn away from this every day. The God who wants to establish us as his people.

So, brothers and sisters, let's be constantly looking to our God, to the Lord Jesus. And if you are worried about an idol in your life, pray about him. Maybe perhaps share it with a trusted Christian friend.

Flee idolatry. how do you build up a strong and lasting church? You do so by obeying the Lord's word and heeding the Lord's warning. And that brings us to our last and final point of the sermon in verse 10 to 28.

[29 : 28] And in this section we are told about other incidents from Solomon's reign. Most of them, not all of them, but most of them involving building. Now, what is this section doing here alongside verses 1 to 9?

Well, I want to suggest that the author, he wants us to read these verses in light of verses 1 to 9. In other words, he wants us to use verses 1 to 9 to assess the agenda, the priorities, and the decisions of Solomon as he goes about what we might call his everyday king's duties in verse 10 to 28.

Because as we do that, we will have a better understanding of whether or not Solomon's building work will last or not. And for that reason, I have called verse 10 to 28 ambiguous activities.

That broke my heart because it didn't balance up with my other sermon titles. But here we go, ambiguous activities. I think when you read verse 10 to 28, in light of verse 1 to 9, some of Solomon's conduct here is good.

Some of it is not so good. And a lot of it is actually ambiguous. You can read it either one way or another. And it makes me nervous.

[30 : 46] It makes us nervous for the future. Let's look at some of the incidents. In verse 10 to 14, the focus of the narrative shifts back to the relationship between Solomon and Hiram, the king of Tyre, the one who back in chapter 5, entered into a treaty with Solomon.

And verse 11 there confirms what was only hinted that back in verse 5, that Hiram was very much a junior party in this treaty. That is, Hiram gave to Solomon much more than Solomon ever gave him.

For Hiram gave Solomon cedar, cypress timber, and, notice, gold. How much gold? Answer verse 11, as much gold as Solomon desired.

Now let's just pause there for a minute and think about this. At one level, we could read these verses as a good thing. Here is the Lord's anointed receiving honour and gifts from a Gentile king.

The Gentile king is clearly being somewhat submissive to Solomon, the Lord's anointed. That is a good thing. And this is probably where Solomon received all the gold that he used to decorate the temple.

[32 : 03] Also, back in chapter 3, remember when the Lord promised to give Solomon wisdom, the Lord also said, I'm going to make you rich. Even though you haven't asked for that, I will make you rich.

And here it's happening. So from one point of view, this could be a good thing. However, just the wording in verse 11, the little detail where it says, Solomon getting all the gold he desired, I think that should make us nervous.

Why? Well, because Deuteronomy, God's law, states clearly it commands kings of Israel not to acquire excessive amounts of gold.

And also in verse 11 and verse 14, they imply that Solomon kept on receiving this gold way, way after he'd finished building the temple.

gold. I think what is implied here is Solomon is building up a mass personal stash of gold. I think this is ambiguous, an ambiguous action.

[33 : 09] From one perspective, it could be viewed as good, but from another perspective, not so good. In fact, worrying. And then at the end of verse 11, we're told about another action that Solomon did that I do not think is ambiguous, but just downright wrong.

Solomon gives Hiram a gift, and the gift is territory. These 20 cities of Galilee. And in verse 12, when Hiram sees them, he is not impressed.

In verse 13, he fires a rather restrained complaint to Solomon and basically declares that these towns are worthless, shoddy cities. Chronicles, the book of Chronicles actually tells us that Hiram gave these cities back to Solomon, refused to take them.

Now what makes this action so wrong is not that Solomon was being stingy, but the fact that he is giving away parts of the promised land. He is giving away parts of the Lord's promised land to those outside of the covenant people.

Solomon's conduct here, when read against verses 1 to 9, does not stand up well. The Lord did not want that to happen. Well then, the next incident, verse 15 to 22, and the author here really clears up an issue that's been nagging us since chapter 5.

[34 : 37] And the issue is this, did Solomon enslave Israelites in order to complete his building projects? Because again, that would go against God's law. Well, in chapter 5, we're told about 30,000 Israelites who entered into forced labor.

Not slave labor, but forced labor. And we're thinking, oh, that makes us nervous. Well, verse 22 and 23, I think, helps us. Because it turns out that that number of Israelites were actually soldiers in the king's army.

They were not slaves. The author here in 1 Kings 9 is emphatic about that. But if you look at verse 20, you'll see that Solomon did use slave labor in his building work.

But his slaves, they were rebellious and unbelieving Canaanite prisoners. Those who are emphatically not part of God's people. So here Solomon has taken these Canaanite threats who remained in the land after the failure of God's people back in the day of the judges to wipe them out.

And he has them shackled under his reign and he's using them to bring about good for his people. I think that's seen as a good thing. The king didn't enslave his own people, but he used the enemy.

- [35 : 56] And just run your eye over verse 15 to 19. You'll see all the lists of the places where Solomon built up things, built up structures, built up cities. Ralph Davis says that most of the things in the list there in verse 15 to 19 were actually key military defense sites that Solomon built up so the nation was prepared for any potential war in the future.

And also some of the places mentioned there, when you get out a Bible atlas and look at them and plot them down, you will find out that Solomon built structures on key positions in the massive highways of the ancient world.

Now why did Solomon do that? Well that was an incredibly wise thing because if you controlled these points of the road, you also controlled the trade flow. So in other words, by building structures in these points and the highways, Solomon pretty much controlled most of the commerce that happened in the near ancient world at that time.

It would have made Israel very wealthy, secure, made them a big player amongst the nations. Solomon, in other words, to use it in the language of Adam, is subduing the world and spreading the kingdom.

So that is really positive until you get to verse 24. Now verse 24, just in case we forgotten, just in case it might have slipped out of our heads, again we get another reminder of what happened in chapter 3.

- [37 : 32] Verse 24, but Pharaoh's daughter, the one that we know time and time again, we've been reminded, Solomon took in marriage. Solomon's daughter went up from the city of David to her own house, which in chapter 7 tells us was right next to the temple of the Lord, the one that Solomon had built for her.

So even in amongst this section where Solomon has done this great wise thing, you get this other reminder of this nagging bit of folly that Solomon has done.

A reminder that he has brought Egypt into the heart, of God's people, something that the law of God totally forbade. The final details of the chapter are much more positive though.

In verse 25, just run your eye over that please, we are told that Solomon took the lead in making sure the religious life of the nation happened properly. The reference to making sacrifices in the temple three times a year, that's probably referring to the great big feasts that happened in Israel.

Passover, Pentecost, tabernacles. So reading that in light of verse 6 to 9, things seem to be going well, no idolatry so far.

- [38 : 51] And in verse 26 to 28, we are told about another really incredibly wise and shrewd decision that Solomon makes. what he does is he secures a maritime trade route, a trade route with ships over the sea from a point in the promised land to this place called Ophir, which was probably in South Arabia or it could have been possibly in India.

Why open up this trade route? Well, because Ophir was synonymous as being a land filled with precious materials, especially gold, especially gold.

And basically, when you read these verses, 26 to 28, and read them alongside verse 15 and 19, Solomon is now controlling all of the trade routes inland and on the sea.

Here we have God's king, very Adam-like in the beginning, isn't it? He is subduing the earth round about him. But that also makes us nervous, because did Adam continue to subdue the earth?

Well, yes, he did, but after he fell. But after he fell. Looking back over this section, I think it's an ambiguous section in summary.

[40 : 18] Yes, there's things that Solomon does here that are positive as he goes about his everyday kingly duties. But at the same time, there's other things that make us nervous for the future.

Now, friends, as we take Solomon's life and compare it with verses one to nine, I want to suggest to you that the author of Kings wants every one of us to do the same with our lives.

If we compared our lives to one to nine, what would we find? What would our priorities be? Would our agenda in life match up with the Lord's?

Would there be idol worship revealed when we compared our lives to six to nine? Friends, let me close by drawing all this together.

As the Lord's people today, we've been called to build up the body of the church and build one another up. And one Kings nine is clear. We do that by obeying the Lord's word.

[41 : 21] Trust and obey for there's no other way. A big part of that means taking the Lord's warnings seriously, heeding them, letting them change the way that we live.

You might think living obediently and living faithfully to the Lord, well, that's far beyond us. That's far beyond me. But friends, that really is not the case. For God is ready and willing to be the giver of the strength that we need to follow him faithfully.

And he dwells in us now by his spirit, the spirit of his son. And he's given us his full and complete final word so that we really do have everything that we need to walk with him in a manner worthy of our calling in Christ today.

So brothers and sisters, let's encourage each other with these words. Let's support each other of these words. Let's pray for each other, turning to the Lord, asking him to help us every day, shun idolatry and to love him more and more and to trust and obey.

Well, let's do that now. Let's bow our heads. Be quiet for a moment and then I'll pray for every one of us. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[42 : 48] Amen. Amen. Oh, gracious heavenly father, we praise you for the grace that you have shown us in Christ. For every spiritual blessing that you have gifted us in him that we do not deserve at all.

Father, we praise you for all that you have done for us in your son. Please, Father, give us the strength that we need.

The strength we need to keep living for you. The strength we need to turn away from idols. To repent of the things in our lives that we know should not be.

And to keep faithfully walking by the obedience of faith. Father, we know that in this life, in this age, as we persevere on, we will always be fighting. We will always be battling.

But thank you that you love us, you're with us, and that you're there to be the source of strength and help and aid that we need. Help us to help one another so that we will persevere to the end.

[44 : 02] And we pray this in Jesus' precious name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. viaors Amen.
Amen. smile