

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

June 4

MONDAY

Having blessed both God and man, Solomon (and the people gathered there) now offer sacrifices to the Lord: 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep!

And Solomon also offered other burnt offerings and peace offerings.

READ: I Kings 8:62-64

The bronze altar was too small to hold all the offerings which Solomon brought before the Lord. Question: Would that be like saying that our offering plates weren't large enough for the offerings? Well, sort of, but the focus is on the hearts of the people to give themselves fully to the Lord. (see vs.61) Our offering in the offering plate will reflect that, but so will our daily lives. So will our priorities. So will our schedules. Let us give ourselves totally and completely to the Lord today. "Lord, I am yours. I'm not holding anything back."

TUESDAY

A seven-day feast kicks off with a great crowd in attendance. Then all the people went home, blessing the king and rejoicing in the Lord.

READ: I Kings 8:65-66

Notice the explanation as to why the people all rejoiced: it was due to the goodness of God! Not the great week of feasting. Not the wonderful ceremony at the Temple's dedication. And not even the completion of the Temple itself. But because God is good. He is good all the time! He's good to you and me, and He's good to us all the time! That is a great reason to rejoice! And that's a great reason to rejoice today!

WEDNESDAY

After Solomon completes the Temple, the palace, and other building projects, the Lord appears to him and tells him that He will dwell in the Temple which Solomon built for Him.

READ: I Kings 9:1-3

The Lord is most gracious. Although the shores of eternity, and the edges of the universe cannot contain God, yet He agrees to somehow dwell within the confines of a tent so that man can know he is near. It is God's passion to be known by us! We were created to know God. It is our highest and greatest calling in all of life - that we can know Him, and know Him well. Even as we are reading His Word this day, that's what it's all about: that I may know Him!

THURSDAY

God tells Solomon that if he keeps God's Commandments as his father David had done, that the promises which God made to David will be true for Solomon as well.

READ: I Kings 9:4-5

God has great things for us - eternal things. But we, too, must walk before Him up-righteously. But there's a problem: you and I cannot do that all the time. Sometimes, we yield ourselves to sinful practices. That's where the righteousness of Jesus Christ comes into the story. It's been given to us, and in our lives and deeds, it is that righteousness which God sees. You and I live by the power of the Son of God living in and through us! Live your life today with that amazing thought in your mind!

FRIDAY

But if Solomon fails to keep the Commandments, and turn to the gods of the pagan nations around Israel, then God will cut Solomon off from the blessings and promises of David, and He will withdraw His presence from the Temple. And the Temple itself will become a building remembered only for its past glories.

READ: I Kings 9:6-9

There is shame in a life that once was lived for God, and over time, began to fall away and lose the vision and the shine. How sad to hear the stories of those who must always talk in the past tense concerning their ministry, witnessing, and service. God's plan is that we would grow in Him, and in His grace, and in His service, not diminish. Pray with me now: "Lord, help the end of my journey to be better than the start. Help me finish strong."

SATURDAY

When Solomon built the Temple and his own palace, he had relied upon the King of Tyre's help, especially with supplies. As a reward, Solomon gave the king 20 Israelite cities (villages) up in Galilee. But when the king went to inspect his gift, he was not happy. He nick-named them The Cities of Cabul which means literally, "the cities that are good for nothing"!

READ: I Kings 9:10-13

It seems as if Solomon genuinely thought Hiram would like the 20 cities. They were in the north, near to Tyre, and would enlarge his kingdom. But the king takes a look at them and rejects them for his own reasons. Later, in 2 Chron. 8:2, we read that Solomon repaired these 20 villages (their walls and wells, I suspect) and sent colonists to live there. The lesson is this: the two men saw the cities in totally different lights. Sometimes, in life, such things happen. But their differences did not mar their friendship. It is possible to disagree without becoming really disagreeable! It's important that we let that principle be seen in us!