

MONDAY

Hiram, the King of Tyre, had previously sent 120 talents of gold to Solomon. That's part of the money Solomon used to pay for his building and re-building projects, including Gezer. Gezer is a Canaanite city which the Pharaoh had captured and given to Solomon as a dowry for his daughter.

READ: I Kings 9:14-16

It's astounding to see how God works in Solomon's life. He has one king giving him gold to pay for his projects, and another giving him a project, you might say: the rebuilding of Gezer. Why did God bless Solomon in these ways? Because blessing Solomon was God's way of demonstrating that there is always reward for walking in His ways! God wants us to learn the lesson from Solomon's experiences, and then run the race that we might also obtain the prize. That prize for us will be given to us when we stand before God Himself. It's an incorruptible prize that is better than cities and gold!

TUESDAY

Solomon's extensive building projects are summarized here: fortresses, cities, storehouses, and barns for his chariots and horses – whatever he wanted to build (the text says), he built!

READ: I Kings 9:17- 18

Gezer was the site of the very first archeological diggings in the Holy Land. Gezer is located on the southern border down towards Egypt, and was once a massive fortress that dated from 3500BC! (not so many generations after the flood!) Archeologists uncovered walls fifty feet thick and uncountable idols of Baal and other Canaanite gods. An Egyptian Pharaoh conquered the city in 1482BC and later, when Solomon married a his daughter, the city was a wedding gift. Solomon rebuilt it as a fortress guarding the southern frontier. Change is part of history and it's part of life - everyday. And it'd part of what God is doing with us. He's at work changing our characters to be more like His Son. So, in a sense - are you ready for this - we are all 'old gezers'!

WEDNESDAY

Solomon inherited the throne of a Kingdom with many non-Jews in the land. Solomon conscripted many of these as a labor force for his building projects.

READ: I Kings 9:20-21

These non-Jewish are described as a people that had not been *destroyed* (or in some translations, it says *exterminated*). But the Hebrew word means to be given or devoted to the Lord in such a way that there is no other use for it anymore. Lambs were devoted to the Lord (for sacrifice) but captives were not. (in their first days in Canaan under Joshua, God commanded the people to devote themselves to the Lord, but they had not obeyed) Solomon made these non-Jewish inhabitants to be slaves in the land. It was the best way

he knew to obey God some 500 years late! Sometimes, things in our lives are put off. We can't go back and re-do everything exactly as we would have liked to have done in the beginning, but we can do something!

THURSDAY

Solomon also conscripted Jews into his service for his various building projects, but he did not make them to be slaves. He assigned them to a great variety of other jobs, some of which are listed here.

READ: I Kings 9:22-23

There were 550 officials with oversight of Solomon's building projects. And here's the point: even the wisest man who ever lived was not wise enough to oversee everything himself. He needed help. Sometimes we need help. That's one reason God surrounds us with others who share a "like-precious" faith. And why they have different strengths and different gifts than our own. It's one of God's ways of getting us the help we need. And, don't forget, God makes us to be the help that others need!

FRIDAY

Solomon added terraces to the palace he had built for Pharaoh's daughter after she moved in. Solomon personally offered sacrifices to the Lord three times a year on the altar in the Temple. In doing so, we are told, he fulfilled his obligations regarding worship in the Temple.

READ: I Kings 9:24-25

In fulfilling all his obligations regarding worship in the Temple, Solomon is foreshadowing a similar statement made by Jesus - that He wanted to be baptized in order to fulfill all righteousness. Both were saying by their actions, "I want to always do what is right. And anything that is right to do, well, I want to do that!" That's an awesome way to look at daily life, isn't it! I want to do everything that is right today. I don't want to miss anything!

SATURDAY

Solomon built ships as well as buildings. These ships carried wealth back to Israel including a lot of gold from Ophir.

READ: I Kings 9:26-28

One of Shem's descendents was named Ophir, and he established a clan which became a small nation and they named their home Ophir. Seemingly, it was well-known for its gold (there are seven references in the OT to the gold of Ophir) but no one knows where it was. (Do you feel a movie coming?) The point of it, I think, is that God blessed Solomon in all he did. Why? Because that's what God had promised to do! So the far greater lesson is this: God always keeps His promises! Every promise He has ever made!