

The Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles

Lesson 12: Solomon's Wisdom and Temple Preparations -- 2 Chronicles

1:1-2:18

Imagine being handed a blank check by the God of the universe. Ask what I shall give you, He says, and the offer is real, no fine print, no catch. Most of us know exactly what we would blurt out: health, wealth, security, success, a long and comfortable life. Solomon, a young king staring at a throne too big for him and a people too many to count, asks for none of those things. He asks for wisdom. Give me wisdom and knowledge, he says, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of Yours? It is one of the most revealing prayers in all of Scripture, because what a person asks for when anything is possible tells you what that person truly loves.

God's response is breathtaking. Because you have asked this, and not riches or honor or the life of your enemies, but wisdom to lead My people, wisdom is granted, and the riches and honor too. Here is a principle that runs straight through the Bible to the lips of Jesus: seek first the kingdom, and the rest is added. Solomon sought the thing that served God and God's people, and God poured out the lesser things besides. The heart that wants what God wants often finds its hands full of gifts it never asked for.

Then the young king turns to the great work of his life: building a house for the name of the Lord. He makes an agreement with Hiram of Tyre for timber and skilled labor, and as he does, he says something that should be carved over the door of every place God's people gather. The house I am to build will be great, for our God is greater than all gods. Solomon understood that the magnificence of the temple was not about Israel's glory but about God's. The grandeur pointed beyond itself to the greatness of the One who would be worshiped there.

But Solomon also confessed the limit of it all. Who is able to build God a house, since heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Him? The most glorious building human hands could raise could never truly house the infinite God. And that confession opens a window for us. The temple was always a pointer, a shadow, a pattern of something greater to come. In Jesus the true temple appeared, the place where God truly dwells with His people, and now His church is built together as a holy temple, a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. As we study Solomon's wisdom and his building, we are watching the foreshadowing of the house God is still building today, with us as the living stones.

Group Discussion: When God offered Solomon anything he wanted, he asked for wisdom to lead God's people rather than riches, long life, or victory (2 Chronicles 1:10-12). What do our deepest requests and ambitions reveal about what we truly love, and how does Solomon's choice challenge the things we instinctively chase?

Personal Reflection: If God said to you tonight, 'ask what I shall give you,' what would you honestly ask for? What does your answer reveal about your heart, and where do you need God to reorder your desires?

Read 2 Chronicles 1:1-2:18

Study Questions

1. Why does Solomon ask for wisdom and knowledge to lead God's people rather than riches or long life, and what does his request reveal about a heart rightly oriented toward God (2 Chronicles 1:10)?
2. What do your own prayers and ambitions most often ask for, and where do you need God to reorder your desires toward what truly matters to Him?
3. What principle is revealed in God granting Solomon wisdom and then adding riches and honor he did not ask for (2 Chronicles 1:11-12), and how does this anticipate Jesus' teaching to seek first the kingdom of God?
4. Where have you been seeking the gifts of God more than God Himself, and what would it look like to seek first His kingdom and trust Him for the rest?
5. When Solomon says the house he will build must be great because our God is greater than all gods (2 Chronicles 2:5), what is he teaching about the purpose of the temple and the supremacy of God?

6. In what ways do your efforts, your work, your service, your giving, point to the greatness of God, and in what ways have they subtly become about your own reputation?
7. What does Solomon mean when he confesses that the heavens cannot contain God, so no one is truly able to build Him a house (2 Chronicles 2:6), and how does this guard us from reducing God to a building or a place?
8. Where are you tempted to confine God to a building, a ritual, or a single hour on Sunday, rather than living before Him every day as His dwelling place?
9. Bring the temple into the light of the New Testament: how does Solomon's temple, the dwelling of God among His people that the heavens could not contain, point forward to Jesus as the true temple (John 2:19-21) and to the church as a holy temple built of living stones, a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (1 Peter 2:4-5; Ephesians 2:19-22), and why does this mean we should not look for a future rebuilt physical sanctuary?
10. Looking back over Solomon's wise request and his temple preparations, name one specific way Jesus is calling you, as part of His living temple, to seek His wisdom and to let your life display the greatness of God this week.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Matthew 6:33, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you; James 1:5, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask God who gives generously; John 2:19–21, Jesus speaking of the temple of His body, the true temple raised in three days; 1 Peter 2:4–5, Christians as living stones built into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood; Ephesians 2:19–22, the church built together into a holy temple, a dwelling place for God by the Spirit

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