



This week at Magdalen Road church we continued our series in Chronicles, transitioning from King David to King Solomon. In 2 Chronicles 1 we see the beginning of the reign of King Solomon.

The passage splits into three very clear sections which introduced three clear themes throughout the reign of Solomon.

v1 to 6: worship

Solomon begins well. He gathers the people and in an interesting 'priestly-kingly' combination leads them in the worship of the Lord. Because the temple has not yet been constructed there may be some ambiguity as to where this worship ought to happen, however in accordance with God's desire worship currently happens at Gibeon where the tabernacle still presides (see 1Chr 16). The writer seeks to calm any further doubts or concerns we may have by highlighting that Bezalel's craftsmanship (see Ex 31 etc) authenticates this worship.

We noted how appropriate it was for Solomon's reign to begin with worship as the foundation for all that was to come. How easy it can be for our relationship with God to not be the driving force for all our activity for him. How easily we become like a 'Luke 15 older brother' simply 'slaving' but we've forgotten who our Father is (and who we are).

v7-13: wisdom

The Lord's offers Solomon whatever he wants. We noted how striking it was that Solomon's request for wisdom is a request not simply so that he might show off! But rather that he might serve well in the role that the Lord required of him. Solomon realises he is unable to lead the people as he ought (possibly through their size or possibly through their questionable history!) and so looks to the Lord for the resources that he needs.

We noted two encouraging and challenging implications from this episode. Firstly the Solomon's fundamental desire was to serve the Lord well, but also that secondly God always enables us to serve him in the way that he's called us. He equips us and provides what we need. We're not meant to do it on our own! An appropriate truth for Pentecost Sunday!

Solomon's wisdom is seen in a number of ways through his reign. It's more than simply theoretical understanding but rather biblical wisdom is the practical ability to live well under God's word in this broken a messy world. We noted again how timely this idea of wisdom is in a world that has lots of superficial 'understanding' - everyone knows a bit about lots of things (because of the Internet) and yet we're not particularly wise as people! Please pray that Magdalen Road Church would be full of people of wisdom who know and love God's word and so live well in their daily lives.

v14-17: wealth

I think there is something of an ambiguity at the end of chapter 1 because we clearly see something of God's blessings to Solomon. There is military strength that will bring protection for God's people there seems to also be incredible wealth and prosperity and yet when we weigh these things alongside Deuteronomy 17 we can't help but notice that many of the things that Solomon is accumulating were specifically banned by God through Moses before they entered the land.

There seems to be a deliberate ambiguity even from the first chapter of Solomon's reign. We are perhaps left wondering whether he will not be the son of David to whom all those extraordinary promises will be fulfilled? Maybe another one of David's line is in mind? There is definite wisdom there but one greater than Solomon will come - One who will lead to people of God in true worship, one who will be perfectly wise and indeed one who will not accumulate wealth but rather will lay down his riches that his people might be truly rich through their spiritual blessings in Christ.

Here are some questions to start off your discussion...

- For each of the three sections in chapter 1 expand how Solomon both does well but also then points us ahead to Christ. How is he an example but also how is he a signpost...?
- Why do we constantly struggle to serve and be active from a place of worship? What's the danger of simply dry activity?
- What is 'biblical Wisdom'? Why does Solomon ask for it? What helpful principles does this remind us of?
- What do you make of the ambiguity in the final section? Why is it something of a fly in the ointment? Compare the three verses with the section in Deuteronomy 17...
- Have a look at 2 Cor 8v9 and Eph 1v3. How do these two passages help us understand the true riches that we have in Christ?