

Sunday, July 21

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2 Chronicles 4:1 - 6:11

4 **1** Solomon also made a bronze altar 30 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 15 feet high. **2** Then he cast a great round basin, 15 feet across from rim to rim, called the Sea. It was 7 feet deep and about 45 feet in circumference. **3** It was encircled just below its rim by two rows of figures that resembled oxen. There were about six oxen per foot all the way around, and they were cast as part of the basin. **4** The Sea was placed on a base of twelve bronze oxen, all facing outward. Three faced north, three faced west, three faced south, and three faced east, and the Sea rested on them. **5** The walls of the Sea were about three inches thick, and its rim flared out like a cup and resembled a water lily blossom. It could hold about 16,500 gallons of water. **6** He also made ten smaller basins for washing the utensils for the burnt offerings. He set five on the south side and five on the north. But the priests washed themselves in the Sea. **7** He then cast ten gold lampstands according to the specifications that had been given, and he put them in the Temple. Five were placed against the south wall, and five were placed against the north wall. **8** He also built ten tables and placed them in the Temple, five along the south wall and five along the north wall. Then he molded 100 gold basins. **9** He then built a courtyard for the priests, and also the large outer courtyard. He made doors for the courtyard entrances and overlaid them with bronze. **10** The great bronze basin called the Sea was placed near the southeast corner of the Temple. **11** Hiram-abi also made the necessary washbasins, shovels, and bowls. So at last Hiram-abi completed everything King Solomon had assigned him to make for the Temple of God: **12** the two pillars; the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars; the two networks of interwoven chains that decorated the capitals; **13** the 400 pomegranates that hung from the chains on the capitals (two rows of pomegranates for each of the chain networks that decorated the capitals on top of the pillars); **14** the water carts holding the basins; **15** the Sea and the twelve oxen under it; **16** the ash buckets, the shovels, the meat hooks, and all the related articles. Hiram-abi made all these things of burnished bronze for the Temple of the LORD, just as King Solomon had directed. **17** The king had them cast in clay molds in the Jordan Valley between Succoth and Zarethan. **18** Solomon used such great quantities of bronze that its weight could not be determined. **19** Solomon also made all the furnishings for the Temple of God: the gold altar; the tables for the Bread of the Presence; **20** the lampstands and their lamps of solid gold, to burn in front of the Most Holy Place as prescribed; **21** the flower decorations, lamps, and tongs—all of the purest gold; **22** the lamp snuffers, bowls, ladles, and

incense burners—all of solid gold; the doors for the entrances to the Most Holy Place and the main room of the Temple, overlaid with gold.

5 1 So Solomon finished all his work on the Temple of the LORD . Then he brought all the gifts his father, David, had dedicated—the silver, the gold, and the various articles—and he stored them in the treasuries of the Temple of God. **2** Solomon then summoned to Jerusalem the elders of Israel and all the heads of tribes—the leaders of the ancestral families of Israel. They were to bring the Ark of the LORD ’s Covenant to the Temple from its location in the City of David, also known as Zion. **3** So all the men of Israel assembled before the king at the annual Festival of Shelters, which is held in early autumn. **4** When all the elders of Israel arrived, the Levites picked up the Ark. **5** The priests and Levites brought up the Ark along with the special tent and all the sacred items that had been in it. **6** There, before the Ark, King Solomon and the entire community of Israel sacrificed so many sheep, goats, and cattle that no one could keep count! **7** Then the priests carried the Ark of the LORD ’s Covenant into the inner sanctuary of the Temple—the Most Holy Place—and placed it beneath the wings of the cherubim. **8** The cherubim spread their wings over the Ark, forming a canopy over the Ark and its carrying poles. **9** These poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place, which is in front of the Most Holy Place, but not from the outside. They are still there to this day. **10** Nothing was in the Ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Mount Sinai, where the LORD made a covenant with the people of Israel when they left Egypt. **11** Then the priests left the Holy Place. All the priests who were present had purified themselves, whether or not they were on duty that day. **12** And the Levites who were musicians—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and all their sons and brothers—were dressed in fine linen robes and stood at the east side of the altar playing cymbals, lyres, and harps. They were joined by 120 priests who were playing trumpets. **13** The trumpeters and singers performed together in unison to praise and give thanks to the LORD . Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, they raised their voices and praised the LORD with these words: “He is good! His faithful love endures forever!” At that moment a thick cloud filled the Temple of the LORD . **14** The priests could not continue their service because of the cloud, for the glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple of God.

6 1 Then Solomon prayed, “O LORD, you have said that you would live in a thick cloud of darkness. **2** Now I have built a glorious Temple for you, a place where you can live forever!” **3** Then the king turned around to the entire community of Israel standing before him and gave this blessing: **4** “Praise the LORD, the God of Israel, who has kept the promise he made to my father, David. For he told my father, **5** ‘From the day I brought my people out of the

land of Egypt, I have never chosen a city among any of the tribes of Israel as the place where a Temple should be built to honor my name. Nor have I chosen a king to lead my people Israel. **6** But now I have chosen Jerusalem as the place for my name to be honored, and I have chosen David to be king over my people Israel.” **7** Then Solomon said, “My father, David, wanted to build this Temple to honor the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. **8** But the LORD told him, ‘You wanted to build the Temple to honor my name. Your intention is good, **9** but you are not the one to do it. One of your own sons will build the Temple to honor me.’ **10** “And now the LORD has fulfilled the promise he made, for I have become king in my father’s place, and now I sit on the throne of Israel, just as the LORD promised. I have built this Temple to honor the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. **11** There I have placed the Ark, which contains the covenant that the LORD made with the people of Israel.”

Romans 7:1 - 13

7 1 Now, dear brothers and sisters —you who are familiar with the law—don’t you know that the law applies only while a person is living? **2** For example, when a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her. **3** So while her husband is alive, she would be committing adultery if she married another man. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law and does not commit adultery when she remarries. **4** So, my dear brothers and sisters, this is the point: You died to the power of the law when you died with Christ. And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, we can produce a harvest of good deeds for God. **5** When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced a harvest of sinful deeds, resulting in death. **6** But now we have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power. Now we can serve God, not in the old way of obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way of living in the Spirit. **7** Well then, am I suggesting that the law of God is sinful? Of course not! In fact, it was the law that showed me my sin. I would never have known that coveting is wrong if the law had not said, “You must not covet.” **8** But sin used this command to arouse all kinds of covetous desires within me! If there were no law, sin would not have that power. **9** At one time I lived without understanding the law. But when I learned the command not to covet, for instance, the power of sin came to life, **10** and I died. So I discovered that the law’s commands, which were supposed to bring life, brought spiritual death instead. **11** Sin took advantage of those commands and deceived me; it used the commands to kill me. **12** But still, the law itself is holy, and its commands are holy and right and good. **13** But how can that be? Did the law, which is good, cause my death? Of course

not! Sin used what was good to bring about my condemnation to death. So we can see how terrible sin really is. It uses God's good commands for its own evil purposes.

Psalm 17:1 - 15

17 1 O LORD, hear my plea for justice. Listen to my cry for help. Pay attention to my prayer, for it comes from honest lips. **2** Declare me innocent, for you see those who do right. **3** You have tested my thoughts and examined my heart in the night. You have scrutinized me and found nothing wrong. I am determined not to sin in what I say. **4** I have followed your commands, which keep me from following cruel and evil people. **5** My steps have stayed on your path; I have not wavered from following you. **6** I am praying to you because I know you will answer, O God. Bend down and listen as I pray. **7** Show me your unfailing love in wonderful ways. By your mighty power you rescue those who seek refuge from their enemies. **8** Guard me as you would guard your own eyes. Hide me in the shadow of your wings. **9** Protect me from wicked people who attack me, from murderous enemies who surround me. **10** They are without pity. Listen to their boasting! **11** They track me down and surround me, watching for the chance to throw me to the ground. **12** They are like hungry lions, eager to tear me apart— like young lions hiding in ambush. **13** Arise, O LORD ! Stand against them, and bring them to their knees! Rescue me from the wicked with your sword! **14** By the power of your hand, O LORD, destroy those who look to this world for their reward. But satisfy the hunger of your treasured ones. May their children have plenty, leaving an inheritance for their descendants. **15** Because I am righteous, I will see you. When I awake, I will see you face to face and be satisfied.

Proverbs 19:22 - 23

19 22 Loyalty makes a person attractive. It is better to be poor than dishonest. **23** Fear of the LORD leads to life, bringing security and protection from harm.