

Day 133

The Building of the Temple

The readings for today are somewhat scattered, but bring together the details of the great work undertaken by Solomon in fulfilling the dream of his father David for a structure in which to worship the Lord.

An online virtual tour of Solomon's temple can be found at <http://www3.telus.net/public/kstam/en/default.htm> This clever site allows you to actually walk into the magnificence of this building and view even into the Holy of Holies. The picture here is from the site.



1 Kgs 5.1-9; 2 Chron 2.1, 3-16 In the building of the Temple (the original Hebrew has *bayith* – ‘house’) for the Lord, Solomon sends to Hiram King of neighbouring Tyre, and in a trade deal for grain and oil, he obtains cedar from there as well as the services of Hiram-Abi to work on the fabric. It is not clear whether Hiram was a worshipper of the Lord or not, but he acknowledges the Lord's hand in the establishment of Solomon's kingdom.

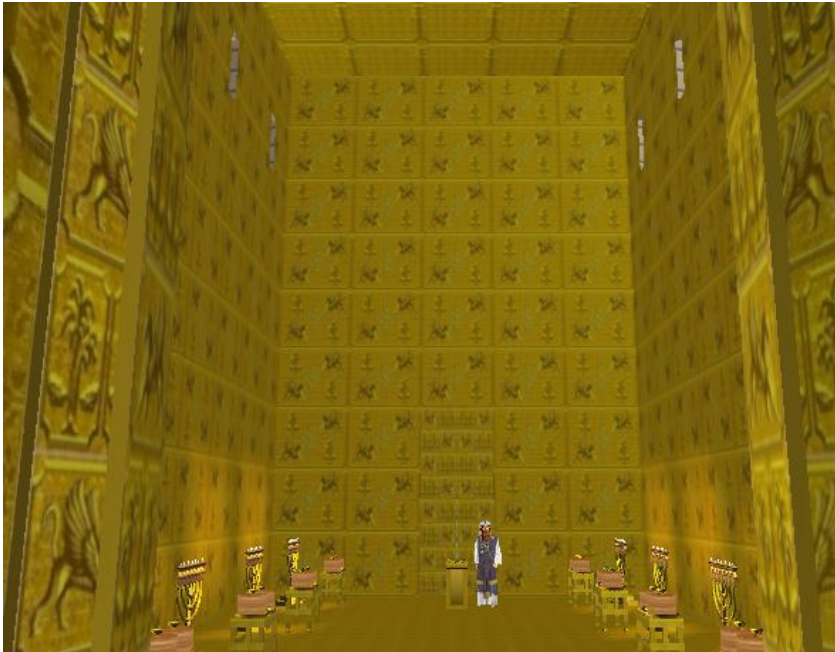
1 Kgs 5.10 – 18; 2 Chron. 2.2, 17-18 There is a mutually beneficial treaty between the two kings, which sees Hiram supplied with grain and oil, and Solomon with all the timber needed. Solomon also allocates thirty thousand Jews to bring wood from Tyre, and one hundred and fifty three thousand migrant workers in Israel to quarry and cut stone for the temple, an enormous workforce.

1 Kings 6.1; 2 Chron 3.1-2 (circa 967AD) Four hundred and eighty years after the Exodus, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, the Temple is begun on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, on the site which David had purchased for the ark's resting place from Araunah the Jebusite, in 2 Sam.24.24.

1 Kings 6.2, 11-13 The Lord speaks to Solomon, that if he will adhere to the ways, to the rule of life of the Lord, then the Lord will dwell in the house being prepared, fulfilling

the promises made to David. The Temple is to be 90 feet long, 30 feet wide and 45 feet high.

1 Kings 6.9b, 18; 2 Chron 3.5-7a The inside of the building itself was cedar covered with gold. It must have been the most awesome sight. It was decorated with carvings of palm trees, chains, gourds and flowers.



1 Kgs 6.7 All stones were prepared at the quarry; no noise of tools was allowed at the holy site.

2 Chr 3.4, 1 Kgs 6.4 – 10, 2 Chron 3.9b There was a porch at the front of the Temple, and windows in the hall (see above), and then around the side were ancillary rooms. One interesting feature is the ledges to stop anyone putting images or items into the Temple wall at a later stage. It was to be plain and straightforward.

1 Kgs 6.16,17,19-22, 2 Chron 3.8-9a; The rear thirty feet of the sanctuary building was reserved for the Holy of Holies, or the Most Holy Place (Heb. קֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים *Qodesh HaQodeshim*) All is overlaid with gold.

1 Kgs 6.23-28, 2 Chr. 3.10-14 There are two enormous cherubim or *Keruvim* (Heb קְרוּבִים of uncertain derivation.) These are not at all like the puffy-faced babies we see floating around baroque church buildings, but are rather enormous angelic beings, combining the qualities of man, ox, eagle and lion.(cf Ezek.1 and 10) These guard the ark in the holy of holies, and stand fifteen feet high.



There is also a heavy veil of purple, red and blue – red, the colour of earth, (edom, adam) blue the colour of the heavens and purple the combination, the colour of the kingdom (?) This separates the Holy Place from the Holy Place.

1 Kgs 6.15,29-35 Everything is cedar overlaid with gold, even the floors!

1 Kgs 6.37,38 After seven years of building, the temple is finally completed.

1 Kgs. 7.13- 22 In front of the Temple building, Solomon has Hiram, or Hiram, erect two bronze pillars, each about 27 feet high and 18 feet in diameter, decorated with chainwork and lilies. The southern pillar he calls Jakin (Heb יָכִינֹחַ *Yakhin*, he will establish) and the northern is Boaz (Heb. בֹּאֵז *Bo-az*, In him strength – the name of Solomon’s ancestor, redeemer of Ruth.)

The freemasons make much of these two pillars, seeing Hiram in their mysteries as the founder of the masonic orders. However, there is no Scriptural meaning to them, other than decoration for the Temple area.

2 Chron 4.1 – 5, 10, 6c. The great altar of burnt offering is built, as is the great washbasin known as ‘The Sea’ (Heb יָם *ha-yam*) standing on the back of bronze bulls. (see picture at start of today’s readings.)

1 Kgs. 7.27-39a; 2 Chron. 4.6a-b There are mobile stands and basins for washing, which can be wheeled around the outer court. (Again, see picture above.)

1 Kgs 6.36; 2 Chron 4.9 Around the building of the temple, enclosing the court where the altar and basin are, a wall of stone and cedar, with great bronze doors.

1 Kgs 7.48 – 50, 2 Chron 4.7, 8, 19-22 All the furnishings to go into the Temple are made by Solomon’s commission. Altar, table and ten candelabras (*menorah*), basins, snuffers, cutters bowls, dishes and censers – all of gold.

1 Kgs 7.51 When all is finished, it is brought into the new building and given over to the treasurers of the Temple.

2 Chron. 8.12-16 As his father had done, Solomon sets in place the continuous worship of the Lord in the new temple area, himself sacrificing to the Lord in accordance with the law. It must have been a magnificent place indeed!

But there is one thing to note; God had not commanded this building. This is very much a dream of David, to honour the Lord by giving Him a permanent structure for his dwelling. But God is a mobile God, and does not stay in one place. God's heart is to live in His people, not behind a curtain in a house. One day, at the moment of His Son's death, that curtain will rip in two, from its top, forty feet up, down to the ground, announcing God's vision fulfilled, and the Holy Spirit come to all flesh!

Day 134

The Dedication of Solomon's Temple

The readings are drawn from both Kings and Chronicles accounts of these events, to give a fuller insight. Where a reading is mirrored in the other book, it carries the same import as both, differing by only a few words.

The Ark of the Covenant brought up (c.960AD) 2 Chron 5.2-14 (mirrored 1 Kgs 8.1-11)

With the Temple ready for use, the central artefact of the worship of Israel is moved from its tent where David placed it, along with all the furniture connected with their worship, into the new 'House of the Lord', as the Chronicler continues to call it. Great numbers of livestock are sacrificed, so many that they cannot be recorded, and the priests bring the ark to its resting place in the most holy place, under the extended wings of the great guardian figures. (It is interesting that when the Law seems to forbid all images, here are two mighty representations of heavenly, unseen beings, which could be interpreted to go against that command. But there they stand.)

All the priests gather at the east side of the altar, along with the musicians, including those great names mentioned in the Psalms – Asaph and Jeduthun, and they sing the anthem of Israel together

כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ *Ki tov ki le'olam chasdo*

For good (is He) for forever His grace-obligation

As the worship arises, the presence of the Lord causes the atmosphere around him to condense, and a cloud appears – an ancient sign of God's awesome face, and the priests are unable to go near the Temple to minister, because the presence of the Lord is so thick and powerful.

Solomon's Address and Prayer 2 Chron 6.1- 35 (Mirrored in 1 Kgs 8.12- 45)

Solomon gives his people a kingly blessing, then he declares the house of the Lord complete, in accordance with his father's instructions, and gives testimony to the Lord's faithfulness.

Solomon then prays a wide-ranging prayer, kneeling and with hands raised on a bronze platform built for the occasion. He thanks God for the *chesed*, grace-obligation which He has shown to them. He asks for God to continue that promise to his family, and asks the Lord to answer them in all kinds of distress and trial, from drought and plague. He also, very interestingly, prays for those who are not Jewish who pray to the Lord, and asks for the Lord to hear them (Having foreign wives, this is perhaps understandable.) Solomon reflects here something of the Lord's wider heart for the planet.

1 Kgs 8.46 – 53 (mirrored 2 Chron.6.36-39) Solomon now prophetically prays for the people when they come into any captivity or are in exile, for the Lord to hear and forgive them, and show them mercy, because they are God's people who He brought up out of the 'iron-smelting furnace' of Egypt – an interesting reference to the formative nature of the captivity.

2 Chron 6.40-42 Solomon uses an ancient formula, 'Let God arise, and come to your resting place', used when the ark settled anywhere in the desert; He also refers to the people of God who are bound to Him in covenant as His *Chasidim* (Heb חַסִּידִים), those who do *chesed* to the Lord. He calls again for God to do *chesed* to him and his line.

1 Kgs 8.54-61 Solomon gets up from his knees and charges the people to be true to the Lord who has not failed them in one of his 'good promises' that He gave through Moses.

2 Chron 7.1-10 (mirrored 1 Kgs 8.62-66). There is more sacrificing, and more singing of the *chesed* anthem, and Solomon has the middle part of the courtyard dedicated so that they can sacrifice more animals there as an overflow for the main altar!

The celebrations last seven days, with all Israel represented, after which they go home rejoicing in God.

It is wonderful in all this to see how the Lord co-operates with the people, in their presenting to Him this structure, which is very dissimilar to the tabernacle He ordained for the desert. But He wants to dwell in their midst, and the sign of the cloud is the sure seal of His presence and dwelling among them.

Day 135

Solomon's Palace and His Cities

1 Kgs 7.1 – 12 Solomon has a palace built for himself of fine stone and cedar-wood, and also a house for his Egyptian wife. It takes thirteen years to build, against the Temple's seven. This is also the place from which he will *right-wise*, administer justice in Israel.

2 Chr. 7.11-22 (mirrored 1 Kgs 9.1-9) In response to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple, the Lord appeared to him one night to confirm that He will do as Solomon prayed for His people, but if they walk away from the covenant after other gods, it will be disastrous for them.

1 Kings 9.10-14, 2 Chron 8.1-6 (mirrored 1 Kings 9.17-19) Hiram of Tyre is unhappy with a gift given to him by Solomon of territory in the Galilee, in the north-west of the country. He calls it *Kabhul* (Heb, כָּבֹוּל), meaning a dead weight, or good for nothing. Thus, Solomon receives back the land, and rebuilds the towns, and settles Israelis there instead. Solomon in his wisdom does not regard this land as useless – he renews it. Hiram has also given Solomon large quantities of gold – perhaps Hiram was looking for a better return for his gifts...

Solomon goes on to capture new cities and to rebuild others, especially Tadmor in the desert. He builds storehouse cities where grain can be kept for hard times. He is manifestly a keen developer.

1 Kgs 9.20-23, 15 (mirrored 2 Chron 8.7-10) We read here that the fate of the surviving Canaanite tribes is to be slave labour for Solomon's many building projects, but no Israelite was enslaved in these works. They are employed instead as overseers and commanders and warriors.

2 Chron 8.11 (mirrored 1 Kgs 9.24) It's surprising that Solomon cannot live with his new Egyptian wife in the same palace, because it would desecrate David's memory to have a pagan woman living in Zion. This is a strange logic, in many ways, given that Solomon does not hesitate from having union with her himself.

1 Kgs 9.26-28; 10.22 (mirrored 2 Chron 8.17,18, & 9.21) Solomon has a fleet of ships for trade based at Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba, the northern arm of the Red Sea, still today a popular Israeli holiday destination with its clear sea and coral reefs, surrounded by the desert hills. From here, and along with Hiram's ships, they import fine goods from overseas. As the well-known English poem puts it;

*Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir,
Rowing home to haven by the palm-green shores
With a cargo of ivory and apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood and gold moidores.*

1 Kings 4. 29-34 Solomon's wisdom is becoming widely known, as well as his thousands of Proverbs (Heb מְשָׁלִים *meshalim*, from root *mashal* meaning to rule – these are wise sayings which enable a ruler to discern, not just old wives' sayings.) He is a songwriter, naturalist, and teacher. People are coming from all over the known world to consult him.

10.14-21, 27, 23-25 (mirrored 2 Chron 1.15, 9.13-20, 27, 22-24) King Solomon's amazing wealth is summed up in his opulent throne, inlaid with ivory, covered with gold. 'Nothing was made of silver, because in Solomon's time, silver was thought of little value'! The wealth increased as people brought him gifts in exchange for his *meshalim*, his precepts of wisdom.

1 Kings 4.26, 10.26, 28,29 (mirrored 2 Chron 1.14, 16,17; 9.25,28) Solomon also has vast stables of horses and chariots – some of which have been uncovered at Megiddo above the Vale of Jezreel, and can be seen today. There is a warning here emerging, however, about the way in which materials and possessions can cloud the heart for God.

1 Kings 4.21-24 (mirrored 2 Chron 9.26) The Kingdom of Israel is now at its greatest extent in history, reaching to the north, to the Euphrates, south to border with Egypt, and into the Philistine territories, so troublesome to Saul and David. And he has peace.

1 Kgs 4.20-25 A picture is painted here of full contentment and joy, with each secure, the promises of God seem to be fulfilled in this Promised Land.

1 Kgs 4 1-19 Solomon's officials are listed here, those who advised and supported his reign. He has divided the land up into twelve counties, each with a governor who is to see the royal household supplied with provisions.

1 Kgs 4.22, 23,27,28 Solomon is rather fulfilling the prophetic word that Samuel had about the cost of having a king in 1 Sam 8.10-18, in terms of the heavy burden of keeping a royal court in the manner to which they have become accustomed, with vast amounts of meat and grain for the king's horses.

1 Kgs 10.1-13 (mirrored 2 Chron. 9.1-12) The Queen of Sheba, a state possibly in northern Africa, comes to visit Solomon on a state visit. She has hard questions, to test him to see if he is the real McCoy, but nothing seems beyond him to answer her. After the testing, the Queen is overwhelmed (Heb וְלֹא־הָיָה בָּהּ עוֹד רוּחַ *ve-lo hayah ba od ruach*, literally, 'and not there was in her any more spirit', she was completely speechless.) She is highly impressed with Solomon's set-up, and blesses the Lord for giving Solomon the throne, acknowledging it is God's *chesed* grace-obligation which has put him there for Israel.

She then gives Solomon many gifts, and this is in addition to all that King Hiram of Tyre has been pouring into the royal treasury. Solomon also gives her gifts to take home, no doubt evidences of his great wealth and generosity to tell the people at home about, before she leaves for home.

Why does this story so capture the imagination of Bible-readers? It is one of those stories told to Sunday-school children. Perhaps it is because of the circumstances, that the Queen of Sheba is seen as a romantic figure, an intelligent woman who has come to test a man, appealing to our sense of theatre and drama. Would that Solomon had stayed on this path where Sheba had found him....

Psalm 72.1-19 This is a Psalm in honour of Solomon, extolling his power and wealth, in particular, the gold of Sheba which is given to him.(v.15). The song ends with a blessing to the Lord and a prayer for His glory to fill the whole earth.

Day 136

The Book of Proverbs

The proverbs of Solomon and others (Agur for example) are called in Hebrew *Meshalim* (Heb. מִשְׁלִים) from the root word *mashal*, meaning to rule. They are short poetic couplets, like the lines of the Psalms, balanced around a single theme, or sometimes contrasting two opposing themes (the fool verse the wise for example.) They are evidence of the wisdom of Solomon, and many of them have passed into our modern culture without us even realizing (eg pride goes before a fall.) This demonstrates the enduring value of their insight which can still be seen three thousand years later.

Call of Wisdom Prov. 8.1 – 36 Wisdom (Heb חֵכְמָה *chokmah*) is personified and presented as a woman calling out in public, recommending herself to the passers-by. It is of note that Solomon, who had such an eye for women, depicts wisdom as a woman in this way. Wisdom is to be desired more than silver and gold, and is tied to being in awe of God.(v.13) Wisdom makes prosperous.

She is called ‘the first of God’s works’ (Heb רֵאשִׁית דְּרַבּוֹתָי *reshit darko*) pre-existing the cosmos. For this reason, wisdom has been linked to the Word of God, pre-the incarnation. Being feminine in gender, however, the reference could also be to the Spirit of God.

Prov. 9.1-6 Wisdom is depicted as a queen, a regal hostess, with a pillared palace and table laden with a banquet for all to come in and taste. Her servants are sent out to invite the simple to come and party with her, and they will receive insight, understanding (Heb בִּינָה *Binah*) There is a presaging here of Jesus’ parable of the king who sent out his servants to invite the poor to a banquet, and this would have been recognised at Jesus’ telling of the story in the gospels.

Prov. 2.1-22 Parts of the proverbs are in the form of a father’s counsel to a son, perhaps Solomon is here remembering his own father’s counsel, or is teaching his own children. It is often the lot of a parent to go unheard in these matters, children preferring to find out the hard way. But here the father is at pains to show how attractive the way of wisdom is.

He warns his son against the lascivious woman, the temptress who would take his body and mar his spirit. He makes it clear that covenant breaking is ungodly and will lead to loss and death.

Prov 3.13-24 The words to the son continue, almost in the vein of commending wisdom as a spouse to the young man, for later proverbs extol the virtuous wife in the same way.

Prov. 1.20-33 Wisdom is depicted as a woman pleading with the foolish to abandon their folly, which will be fatal, while in Prov 9.13-18, folly is also depicted but as a siren luring people to their destruction.

Solomon’s personal plea 4.1-27 This is the close counsel of a loving father, having himself received the guidance of his father. Wisdom is seen as a quest and a journey, a prize and a treasure. The son is urged to ‘guard your heart, it is the fountain of life.’

Day 137

The Purpose of Proverbs

Prov 22.17-21, 1.1-7, 25.1 Wise sayings will promote trust in the Lord, bring rhythm and discipline to life, justice and prudence. Being in awe of the Lord will result in right action in life, which is what wisdom essentially is, not a compendium of facts, but a successful way of life.

Fear of the Lord 9.10-12, 10.27, 14.2, 14.26-27, 15.33, 19.23, 28.14 There is a strong emphasis in these references to the fear of the Lord as that which leads to life as opposed to the opposite which destroys.

I wrote these words in the monastery house of the Franciscans in Kraków, Poland, having walked back through the rainy old town, hearing the blare of the clubs, seeing a laser light advertisement on the street for a strip-joint, hearing people raucously singing in a bar, and then sitting for an hour or two with the young brothers in the monastery, talking about Jesus and His joy and His hope. What an awesome contrast, what a beauty in our talking set against such a shallow, dead-end hedonism out in the city.

Trust in God or self 3.5-8 This is one of the most quoted references in the Proverbs, encouraging a total dependence, a total letting go to lean on God, and not on our own intelligence or assumptions about life. And yet, how much we think we have our own answers. Health lies in the fear of the Lord.

14.12(mirrored 16.25), 16.3, 16.20, 18.2, 18.4, 18.10, 19.3, 20.24, 21.22, 26.12, 28.26, 29.25 The fear of the Lord is contrasted here with man's folly, but the fear of man is also foolishness.

Divine Providence 15.3, 16.1,4,9,33, 19.21, 21.30-31, 22.12, 27.1 There is a message in these proverbs that the Lord sees everything that goes on, and is not fooled by anything. We do not have control of our destiny, as natural events demonstrate, from volcano ash hindering our travel, to earthquakes removing whole towns from the earth.

Wisdom and Folly 13.14, 14.24, 15.24, 16.22, 17.12, 24.7,13,14 The Scriptures identify a category of man who is a fool, that is, in some cases, one who is lazy and care-not about life, but in others, one who is deliberately obtuse, like the man who goes and does again the thing he did before which didn't work the first time!

Dealing with Fools 26.4-11, 27.22, 29.9 The teaching is clear and concise, - don't suffer fools gladly, but confront them with their folly, because entertaining them will result in harm and injury.

Discernment and Understanding 10.13, 23,13.15, 14.6,8,15,33, 15.21, 16.16, 17.24, 19.8, 20.5, 20.12 The fool and the wise man are set in antithesis here, the wise being seen as those who really take care of their wellbeing, rather than the uncaring fool who is thoughtless.

Knowledge 10.14, 13.16, 14.18, 15.14, 18.15, 19.2, 20.15, 21.11, 23.12, 24.3,4. The word knowledge in Hebrew, *da'at* (Heb דַּעַת) signifies something known by experience,

rather than just by information. This is why an ounce of experience is worth a heap of information. It is a jewel to be treasured.

Day 138

Sharing and Responding to Wisdom

Advice and Rebuke 3.1,2; 9.7-9; 10.8;12.15;13.1;13.13; 15.31;17.10;19.16; 19.20; 10.25; 19.27; 23.9; 25.12; 27.5,6; 27.17; 29.1 In an individualistic age, where personal rights are king, we find it so hard to receive correction and rebuke. Yet these proverbs exalt advice and rebuke, and welcome them as friends to wisdom. Precious words such as ‘wounds from a friend can be trusted’ and ‘as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another’ teach us not to be afraid of conflict if we are prepared to respond constructively.

Value of Advisors 11.14;15.22; 20.18; 24.5,6. The virtue of a wide spread of advice is found here, especially in times of war. The wise man knows how to listen widely and act prudently.

Discipline 3.11,12; 10.17; 12.1; 13.18; 13.24; 15.5; 15.10; 15.12; 15.32; 19.18; 20.30; 22.6; 22.15; 23.13,14; 29.15; 29.17; 29.19; 29.21 The words for discipline (Heb. מוֹצָר *musar* from root meaning instruction or warning) and reproof (Heb. תּוֹכְחָה *tokhechah* from root meaning refutation to rebuke) appear together in close proximity in many of these verses. Unlike modern humanist liberal ideology, the wisdom teaching of the Scripture is that rebuke and correction bring life, and that even pain through corporal punishment can form a healthy character. Modern western societies have foresworn this model, and wonder now why so many teachers are beaten in schools, and why it is so hard to attract people to stay in the teaching profession. The Scripture have it thus ‘folly is in the nature of the child, but the smack of correction will drive it out.’ This is decried by liberals as child abuse, while the Bible teaches that it is abuse of a child not to teach them that they are not the centre of the universe.

The last of these Scriptures warns of the dangers of pampering the young, leading in the end to break-up.

Lawkeeping 28.4;28.7; 28.9; 29.18 Bearing in mind what was said about the word *Torah* in Psalm 119 above (Day 123), that is, that it is not a forensic term, but more the *rule of life*, we are warned that those who forsake God’s pattern and precepts come to *unruly life*, lived with no restraint or dignity.

Repentance 14.9;28.13 Sin covered up is a way to poverty, and the practice of making amends leads to compassion being shown. (Forgive us as we forgive...)

Good and Evil

Righteousness and Wickedness 10.6,7; 10.16; 10.28-30; 11.5-10; 11.18-20; 11.23; 12.2,3; 12.5-8; 12.12, 12.21, 12.28; 13.9; 13.21; 13.25; 14.11; 14.19; 14.34; 15.6; 15.9; 20.7; 21.18; 24.15,16; 28.12; 28.28; 29.2; 29.16; 29.27 In this selection of verses, the righteous are set antithetically against the wicked. There are some which begin with the acts of righteousness set against the acts of wickedness, and other which reverse the order. One particular verse, 24.16, avows that even if the righteous man is knocked down, he will get up seven times, while the wicked will fall. Towards the end of the selection,

are verses stating that when righteousness triumphs, people celebrate, but when the wicked come to power, people hide and groan.

Integrity and perversion 10.9; 13.6; 15.26; 21.8; 24.8,9; 28.18; 29.10 Here the message is that crime is insidious and underhand, while integrity holds its head up high, and has no need to hide. This is why the last reference says that the wicked try to kill people of integrity.

Appropriate consequences 3.33-35; 10.3; 10.22; 10.24,25; 11.21; 11.27; 11.30,31; 14.14; 14.22; 16.7; 17.13; 18.3; 19.29; 21.12; 21.16; 21.21; 22.8; 26.1; 26.3; 26.27. It is not as though God is acting capriciously in allowing the consequences of their sin to come upon the wicked, because, as it says in 11.27, 'evil comes to him who searches for it.' The key is to be in right relationship with the One who sees all our actions, then those who plan what is good will find *grace-obligation chesed* and *faithfulness emet*.

Day 139

Sincere Motivation

Motive and the Heart Prov.15.11; 16.2; 17.3;20.11;20.27; 21.2; 27.19 The import of these verses is that, although we strangely think we are hidden from God in what we do, God knows all that goes on in us, and evaluates our motives and intentions. The heart is the core (*French Coeur*) of a human being, and what is planted deep in the spirit is what will come out.

False Worship Prov. 15.8;15.29; 21.3; 21.27 God hates hypocrisy and false sacrifice. In 21.3, the key is given – to do what is straight (Heb תְּדָאָה *tzedaqah*) and *right-wising* justice (Heb. מִשְׁפָּט *mishpat*) is more acceptable to God than is sacrifice. This is a key moral principle; God is not a God who is appeased by religious practice, but who is looking for integrity and consistency in our dealings with Him and one another.

Duplicity Prov. 6.12 – 15; 10.10-11; 11.3; 16.30; 20.14; 23.6-8; 26.23-26 Here we are warned against all those who say one thing but mean or do another, from stingy hosts to plain crooks. If we start from a place of believing that everyone can and does sin, we will help each other not fall into traps of naïve gullibility.

Concern for Others

Love and Faithfulness Prov.3.3-4; 16.6; 20.6; 25.19 Most of these verses use the translation 'love' for the Hebrew word *chesed*, the grace-obligation of God, and two have used also *emet*, the truth-faithfulness of God. We are to bind God's *chesed* and *emet* to us, and write them on our hearts, rather than rely on the assumed but false dependability of man.

Love, Hatred and Compassion Prov.10.12; 15.17; 17.5; 24.17,18; 25.21,22 Here love (Heb אַהָבָה *Ahavah*) and hatred (Heb שִׂנְאָה *Sin'ah*) are set in contrast to each other. Even enemies are to be shown care, foreshadowing Jesus' teaching to love enemies, and the poor are to be loved, not mocked.

Kindness and Mercy Prov. 11.16,17; 12.10; 12.25; 21.10 In 11.16,17 are mentioned the woman of favour, the woman who shows kindness (Heb אִשֶּׁת-חַיִּים *eshet-cheyn*) and the

man of grace-obligation (Heb **יֵשׁוּעַ** *Ish chared*) as opposed to the cruel and vindictive who receive only trouble. Note in 12.10, the righteous man cares for his livestock.

Overstaying Welcome Prov. 25.16,17 Respecting one another's space is a valuable discipline, and the Lord has bothered to remind us of it in the Scriptures.

Concern for Self

Pride and Humility Prov.11.2; 12.9; 13.7; 13.10; 15.25; 16.5; 16.18,19; 18.12; 19.10; 20.9; 21.4; 21.24; 22.4; 25.27; 26.16; 27.2; 27.21; 29.23 Pride (Heb **גָּאוֹן** , *ga'on*) is seen as a great obstacle to godliness, while humility leaves space for others to recognise the good qualities in a man or woman, which is why we should leave recommendation of our virtues to others, and not advertise ourselves. (27.2)

Selfishness Prov.18.1 Selfishness is an irrational pastime, leading to loneliness.

Jealousy Prov.27.4 The power of jealousy is seen as more destructive than anger.

Envy Prov. 14.30; 24.19,20 Here, envy is seen as having a power to screw us up inside, and leave us without hope.

Greed Prov.28.25 When we try and accumulate, we just cause pain, but as Solomon found, if we have a listening heart, we will accrue good things in the process.