

Gospel Doctrine Lesson 26 – “ King Solomon: Man of Wisdom, Man of Foolishness” (1 Kings 3; 1 Kings 5–11)

Lesson Goal: To encourage us to use our blessings wisely and to enter the temple worthily.

Essential Question: **WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO FOR ETERNAL LIFE?**

Why are we unwilling to make great sacrifices for the kingdom of God when we're willing to in other areas of our lives? Are we willing to sacrifice the natural man, give up our carnal desires, and turn to the Lord?

Elder Dallin H. Oaks: “We generally think of Satan attacking us at our weakest spot. ... But weakness is not our only vulnerability. **Satan can also attack us where we think we are strong—in the very areas where we are proud of our strengths. He will approach us through the greatest talents and spiritual gifts we possess.** If we are not wary, Satan can cause our spiritual downfall by corrupting us through our strengths as well as by exploiting our weaknesses” (“Our Strengths Can Become Our Downfall,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 12).

President Heber J. Grant: “There is but **one path of safety** to the Latter-day Saints, and **that is the path of duty.** It is not a testimony, it is not marvelous manifestations, it is not knowing that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is true, that it is the plan of salvation, it is not actually knowing that the Savior is the Redeemer, and that Joseph Smith was His prophet, that will save you and me, but **it is the keeping of the commandments of God**, the living the life of a Latter-day Saint (Heber J. Grant, Conference Report, April 1915, p.82).

1. The Lord blesses Solomon with wisdom, riches, and honor -- 1 Kings 3:5–28

These scriptural passages suggest the Lord’s pattern for obtaining wisdom:

W—WORD OF THE LORD. Wisdom comes through the word of the Lord unto His Children.

Alma 37:8,12: And now, it has hitherto been **wisdom** in God that these things should be preserved; for behold, **they have enlarged the memory of this people**, yea, and convinced many of the error of their ways, and **brought them to the knowledge of their God** unto the salvation of their souls. . . for he doth counsel in **wisdom** over all his works, and his paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round.

I—INQUIRE. Wisdom comes when we inquire of the Lord and invite His blessings, rather than seeking only worldly learning.

James 1:5-6: If any of you **lack wisdom**, let him **ask of God**, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. **But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.** For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

S—SPIRIT. Wisdom comes when we listen to the spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:7-8: But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by **the Spirit the word of wisdom**; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.

D—DEPEND UPON THE LORD. Wisdom comes when we depend fully upon the Lord, the font of all wisdom.

Ephesians 1:8, 17: Wherein he hath abounded toward us **in all wisdom** and prudence . . . That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, **may give unto you the spirit of wisdom** and revelation in the knowledge of him.

O—OBEDIENCE. Wisdom comes through obedience to the Lord and His gospel plan.

Alma 37:35: O, remember, my son, and **learn wisdom in thy youth**; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God.

M—MEEKNESS. Wisdom comes when we endure in meekness and humility, always receptive to the Lord’s counsel.

D&C 97:1-2: Many . . . are truly humble and are **seeking diligently to learn wisdom** and to find truth. Verily, verily I say unto you, blessed are such, for they shall obtain; for **I, the Lord, show mercy unto all the meek.**

In the case of Solomon, wisdom surely prevailed in his earlier years as king:

- Solomon embraced the **word of the Lord**, conveyed to him by his father, David.
- Solomon **inquired** of the Lord, asking for a blessing of wisdom.
- Solomon then followed the **Spirit** to complete the temple of the Lord.
- Solomon then **depended** upon the Lord to grant him power to secure Israel.
- Solomon **obeyed** the Lord by teaching the people to obey the commandments.
- Solomon displayed **meekness** in his calling, saying "I am but a little child."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE AN "UNDERSTANDING HEART"?

Elder Marion D. Hanks: "The one gift for which this wise man prayed, in his humility, acknowledging that God had called him and that he was not qualified of himself, **was an understanding-heart**, so that in his respectful leadership of the people he might know how to judge between good and bad." (BYU Speeches of the Year, 1964, p7)

Elder Howard W. Hunter: "If the Lord was pleased because of that which Solomon had asked of him, **surely he would be pleased with each of us if we had the desire to acquire an understanding heart. This must come from conscious effort coupled with faith and firm determination.** An understanding heart results from the experiences we have in life if we keep the commandments of God. . . .

"**We need more understanding in our relationships with one another**, in business and in industry, between management and labor, between government and the governed. **We need understanding in that most important of all social units, the family**; understanding between children and parents and between husband and wife. Marriage would bring happiness, and divorce would be unknown if there were understanding hearts. **Hatred tears down, but understanding builds up.** Our prayer could well be as was Solomon's, 'Lord, give me an understanding heart.'" (In Conference Report, Apr. 1962, 75–76).

2. King Solomon directs the construction of a great temple and has a palace built for himself -- 1 Kings 5–6; 1 Kings 7:1–12

Note the size of the temple:

And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof was **threescore cubits (90')**, and the breadth thereof **twenty cubits (30')**, and the height thereof **thirty cubits (45')** (Cubit = 18 inches) (2 Kings 6:2).

And the size of Solomon's house?

He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof was **an hundred cubits (150')**, and the breadth thereof **fifty cubits (75')**, and the height thereof **thirty cubits (45')**, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars (1 Kings 7:2).

Does it matter that Solomon spent more than twice as much time and made a bigger house for himself than he made for the Lord? Is it possible to anticipate the future troubles of this great king because of what we see happening here?

The temple of Solomon was adored with incredible riches.

David had prepared:

- **108,000 talents of gold** for use in the temple.
- **A talent weighed just over 75 pounds (75.6 lbs).**
- **Today a talent of gold is worth \$1,596,672.** But David had 108,000 talents.
- Thus, the gold of the temple alone was worth **\$172,440,576,000!** (1 Kings 6:20-22).
- That is the price of those **8,164,800 pounds of gold.**

Price of Gold in 2014

Per oz.= **\$1,320**

Per lb.= **\$21,120**

3. Solomon dedicates the temple -- 1 Kings 8:22–66; 1 Kings 9:1–9

The temple can help us resolve our most serious problems.

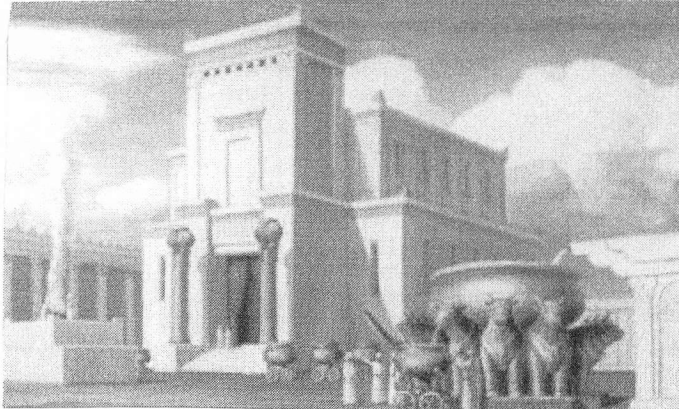
Here are some of the problems mentioned in the prayer with which involvement in the temple can help.

- unanswered prayers (8:30)
- encroaching enemies (8:33)
- drought (8:35)
- a plague of the heart (8:38)
- repentance (8:46,47)
- famine, disease, plague (8:37)

President Boyd K. Packer: "Temples are the very center of the spiritual strength of the Church. We should expect that the adversary will try to interfere with us as a church and with us individually as we seek to participate in this sacred and inspired work. Temple work brings so much resistance because it is the source of so much spiritual power to the Latter-day Saints and to the entire Church (Boyd K. Packer, "The Holy Temple," Ensign, Feb. 1995, 36).

Elder James E. Talmage: "The glorious pre-eminence of this splendid structure [Solomon's temple] was of brief duration. Thirty-four years after its dedication, and but five years subsequent to the death of Solomon, its decline began; and this decline was soon to develop into general spoliation [plundering], and finally to become an actual desecration. Solomon the king, the man of wisdom, the master-builder, had been led astray by the wives of idolatrous women, and his wayward ways had fostered iniquity in Israel. The nation was no longer a unit; their factions and sects, parties and creeds, some worshipping on the hill-tops, others under green trees, each party claiming excellence for its own particular shrine. The Temple soon lost its sanctity. The gift became depreciated by the perfidy [betrayal] of the giver, and Jehovah withdrew His protecting presence from the place no longer holy." (*House of the Lord*, pp. 6-7.)

Solomon's Temple



4. Solomon becomes excessively wealthy and marries many non-Israelite women who persuade him to worship idols -- 1 Kings 10-11

President Heber J. Grant: "I rejoice in seeing the Latter-day Saints increase in wealth; I rejoice when they build fine homes and to know they are able to keep carriages to ride in, and to enjoy the comforts of life. **But I cannot rejoice in seeing the people grow in knowledge, intelligence and wealth unless there is a corresponding growth in good works and love for their fellow man; unless the desire is manifested in their works to carry on and advance the work of God.** The more wealth and the more intelligence we can gain, the greater will be our ability to labor for the advancement of God's Kingdom." (*Collected Discourses*, Vol 1, Sep 1, 1889)

Elder Neal A. Maxwell: "What sort of individuals will receive eternal life? Among others, the few rich who sought the kingdom first and wanted riches only in order to do good (Jacob 2:18-19); those few who learned not to cease hearkening to the counsels of God (2 Nephi 9:29); those few whose hearts were not set upon the praise and things of this world; those few who did not abuse power and authority; **the few who learned to obtain and handle the very powers of heaven through significant personal righteousness** (D&C 121:35-36)." (*A Wonderful Flood of Light*, p58)

Elder Dallin H. Oaks: "How ... do we prevent our strengths from becoming our downfall? **The quality we must cultivate is humility. Humility is the great protector. Humility is the antidote against pride. Humility is the catalyst for all learning, especially spiritual things.** Through the prophet Moroni, the Lord gave us this great insight into the role of humility: 'I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them' (Ether 12:27).

"We might also say that if men and women humble themselves before God, he will help them prevent their strengths from becoming weaknesses that the adversary can exploit to destroy them. ...

"... If we are humble and teachable, hearkening to the commandments of God, the counsel of his leaders, and the promptings of his Spirit, **we can be guided in how to use our spiritual gifts, our accomplishments, and all of our other strengths for righteousness.** And we can be guided in how to avoid Satan's efforts to use our strengths to cause our downfall.

"In all of this, we should remember and rely on the Lord's direction and promise: 'Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers' (D&C 112:10)" ("Our Strengths Can Become Our Downfall," *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 19).

Satan will attack us in the weakest part of our armor. He did with Saul, David, and Solomon. We, as modern Israel, need to **avoid pride, misuse of wealth, and lust for the world's esteem**--three temptations that destroyed Solomon.

WHY ARE WE SOMETIMES UNABLE TO RECOGNIZE OUR OWN SINFULNESS????

Elder David A. Bednar: "If something we think, see, hear, or do distances us from the Holy Ghost, then we should stop thinking, seeing, hearing, or doing that thing...The Spirit cannot abide that which is vulgar, crude, or immodest...We should remember that the **covenant promise is that we may always have His Spirit to be with us.** (Conference Report, "That We May Always Have His Spirit to Be with Us," April 2006).