

It Is Written

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David and the Temple

By Stan Cox

In 1 Chronicles 17:1, David showed a sincere heart in his desire to build a permanent Temple to honor God. "Now it came to pass, when David was dwelling in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, 'See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the Lord is under tent curtains.'"

Interestingly, it seems that Nathan's response to David was presumptuous. That is, it came from Nathan himself, rather than from God. Nathan said to David, "Do all that is in your heart, for God is with you" (17:2). Much of Nathan's words were accurate. David was certainly a righteous king, and in general his reign was in accord with God's purpose. However, it was wrong for Nathan to assume God would desire for David to build the temple.

An important lesson can be learned from this narrative. The righteous man, can never presume, (just because he loves God, and seeks to please Him), that all that he does is pleasing just because of that love and devotion. It seems, however, that most religious people act upon such presumption.

"I love God so much, and I want to do big things for Him. I am confident he will be pleased when I do 'A', 'B' or 'C' for Him."

In fact, God did not want David to build Him a house. That very night, God told Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: "You shall not build Me a house to dwell in"' (17:4). The reasons behind God's decision were not immediately apparent to David, but regardless of the why, David did not know God's mind on the matter. To forge ahead and build a temple to God, without His approval, would have been presumptuous, and sinful.

Fortunately, David understood this truth. Nathan told David that the one who followed him on the throne would be the one to build the temple. After heaping praise upon the Almighty, David said, "And now, O Lord, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, let it be established forever, and do as You have said. So let it be established, that Your name may be magnified forever, saying, 'The Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, is Israel's God.' And let the house of Your servant David be established before You." (17:23-24).

The lessons for us are important. We should, as David, be desire to do great things for God. However, we should recognize that even godly men can lead us astray. Just as Nathan initially misled David, it is possible for even sincere men to be wrong about God's will. That is why the Bereans examined the teaching of Paul in Acts 17:11. "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."

Ultimately, it is God's word that establishes His will for us today. If we go ahead with our majestic plans, but do so without divine authority, we are doomed to failure. Presumptuous efforts to please God are sinful! "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21-23).

David respected God, and left the building of the temple to his son. Do we show the same respect ourselves?

"Do Not Be Rash With Thy Mouth"

By Jarrod Jacobs

The first seven verses of Ecclesiastes 5 warns us about the words we say. In this passage, we see that

“a multitude of words” is associated with foolish behavior (v. 3), vanity (v. 7), evil (v. 1), and sin (v. 6). Parallel to this is what Christ taught in Matthew 6. He said that the heathen (Gentiles, nations, etc.) think they’ll be heard in their prayers because of their “much speaking” (Matt. 6:7). Yet, God didn’t acknowledge their “speaking.” Even most men see through the tactics of someone who “talks too much”! Don’t be like that.

How many times do we “shoot off our mouths” and not consider what we said until later, if ever? Solomon, by inspiration, makes it clear that our words can cause us great trouble. We’re reminded that God is vigilant in noting what we say (Ecc. 5:2b). This warning is repeated in such New Testament passages as Matthew 12:36-37, and James 3:1-12. In the book of Ecclesiastes, the Preacher says that our mouths can cause our flesh to sin (Ecc. 5:6). How closely do you watch what you say? David said, “I will keep my mouth with a bridle” (Ps. 39:1). What’ll you do? In our age of “social media,” remember that our “rash words” can be written as well as spoken. Are you careful to guard your words on social media? Are you careful about the stories you share? Typed words will condemn us as quickly as the words that come from our mouths!

As we read Ecclesiastes 5, we note that verse four tells us to make sure and pay our vows when we make them. While this isn’t a passage talking exclusively about marriage, marriage vows are promises we make to our spouse and God, promising, “til death do us part,” among other things. Married people, are you honoring your vows? Man’s vows are so significant that it’s written that it’s better for us not to vow than to make a vow and not pay or fulfill it (v. 5). How are we doing in honoring the vows we make? See, if you make vows, but don’t keep them, then you’re a liar (Rev. 21:8)! Making vows also includes our debts! If you promise to pay someone back when you make a debt, then this is a vow. You need to make sure and pay your debts as you promised to do!

“By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words, thou shalt be condemned” (Matt. 12:37). Let’s take the words of Christ and Solomon to heart. Our words are precious! Our words are the vehicles of our thoughts. We need to control our thoughts and make sure we don’t “engage our mouths when our brains are in neutral”! “Keep thy foot” (Ecc. 5:1) means behave yourself! Let us behave ourselves and watch our words when we offer our sacrifices to God (Ecc. 5:1; Heb. 13:15; I Pet. 2:5), and in our daily speech! Jesus said our words can save, or our words will condemn.

Why is it that many of our politicians have no respect by the populace? It’s because these people talk a lot, they promise (vow) a lot, and many times, their words amount to nothing! We judge them as liars because they promised things and never fulfilled their promises/vows! How refreshing it would be to hear a politician who didn’t promise anything except to represent constituents to the best of his ability! That’s enough!

Someone said that they prayed that their words might always be sweet, for one day, they may have to “eat them”! How true! Let’s follow the command of Ephesians 4:29, 32, Ecclesiastes 5, James 1:19, and chapter 3 when we speak! We’ll be blessed immensely when we aren’t “rash” (hasty) to speak.

Proverbs 18:2

By Boyd Jennings

"A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion." (Prov. 18:2)

The fool is quick to offer his point of view and put his knowledge on display.

He (or she) enjoys speaking his mind. He is, as we say, “in love with the sound of his own voice”.

The only time listening is of interest to him is when it gives him more subject matter to talk about.

With his mouth open his mind is shut, and the longer he talks the less chance he has to learn, or show an interest in others.

The fool can be well informed, but his understanding is fruitless; wisdom falters for lack of application.