

June 2, 2013  
Pentecost 2

*"Solomon's World View Is Our World View"*

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### **1 KINGS 8:22-23, 41-43**

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**T**hen Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below-- you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it-- as it is today. "As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name-- for men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm-- when he comes and prays toward this temple, then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name."

A mother and her daughter were on a whale watching trip off the coast of Santa Barbara. A large blue whale breached. They were awed by its beauty. The mother said to her daughter, "What an amazing creature our God has made!" The man next to them remarked I have a different view on how the whale came to be.

The Christian college student who listens to her teacher explain how life evolved from one cell that spontaneously arose from primordial ooze has a different view of how life began. She believes the words of Genesis 1 that tell us God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them. Our Christian world view differs dramatically from the Muslim terrorist who shouts Allah Akbar and then sets off a bomb that kills dozens of people in a crowded marketplace. We believe in a God who loves people so much he gave his only begotten Son and whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.

King Solomon was one of the wisest people that ever lived on this earth. As we listen to him pray at the dedication of the great temple he built to the glory of the one true God we realize he expresses a world view that is also our world view. He believes that there is only true God who saves people. He also believes that this one true God wants everyone in the world to come to know about him and be saved.

### **There is one source of salvation for all people**

"Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven and said:" Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord and prayed with his hands lifted up to heaven. He did not stand at the entrance to the temple or in the temple courts. He stood in front of the altar of the Lord, an altar made of bronze, where numerous animal sacrifices were offered. It was here before the Lord's altar that priests would offer animal sacrifices, sprinkle their blood on the altar and then burn either part or all of the animal on the altar.

The sound of animals bleating, and sight of blood, and the smell of animal flesh burning in fire pointed people to a future great sacrifice that Jesus would offer for the sin of the world. The book of Hebrews says these sacrifices at the altar were a copy or shadow of what is in heaven. They pictured how Jesus would go into the presence of God with his blood to pay the ransom price for our sins. Hebrews 9:14 says, "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death so that we may serve a living God."

When Solomon prays he calls on the name of the one true God. "O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below-you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way." He does not pray to some nebulous spirit in the sky. He does not call out "O God whoever you are or where ever you are." He calls on the name of the one true God. He says, "There is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below." He believes his God is a real person. He believes this God of love keeps his covenants or promises, especially the promise to send a deliverer who will rescue people from their sin. This one true God told Adam and Eve he would send the Seed of the Woman to crush the devil's head. This one true God promised Abraham a future descendant who would bless the whole world. There is no other god in all the world who has made such a promise. "There is no God like you heaven above or on earth below."

You share this same world view with Solomon. You believe there is only one true God who reveals himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit on the pages of the Holy Bible. You believe that this one true God has developed a unique plan to rescue you by giving you the gift of his Son to live the perfect life you could never live. He offers the perfect sacrifice on the cross for your sin and then rises from the dead. Your world view coincides with the exclusive claim that Jesus made for himself when he said, "I am the Way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me." You share the same world view with Peter who made this exclusive claim, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

In the Revelation John sees the saints gathered around the throne of God wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands. They unite their voices and cried out loudly, "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Salvation is not found in other religions. It is not found in us. It is only found in God. Express this world view to people openly and publicly and be prepared to be ridiculed and shamed for thinking there is only one way back to God.

During our Bible study this past week in Colossians we came across these words where Paul writes that he wants his beloved Christians in Colosse to know the mystery of God, namely Christ." The name Jesus means Savior. The name Christ means the one God has anointed or chosen to do the work of saving us and rescuing us. This is all a mystery, because unless your are born again and your eyes are opened to see, you will never fully grasp just how thoroughly and completely the true God will go to rescue you through his Son, whom he calls "the Christ."

In the class I drew a comparison to the great artist Michelangelo. With my own eyes I have see one of the greatest pieces of art in the world, the marble depiction of Mary holding the body of Jesus after it was taken down from the cross. How could this man begin chipping

away at a block of marble and carve such beauty from the rock. How could he lie on his back for years to apply different colors of plaster to the ceiling and make it appear so life like and real? I have seen the Sistine Chapel before it was restored. I only wish I could see it again. Think now of all the careful planning that went into the promise God made to send us a Savior. Think of the careful planning that went into having him suffer for every sin that was committed. Think of how carefully Jesus executed every detail of the plan. When he dies he cries out from the cross, "It is finished." There were no sins left unpaid. Solomon had it right. There is no God in the world like our true God who has designed our salvation for us, and then carried out the design perfectly.

I would never even begin to think that I could help an artist like Michelangelo in the painting of the Sistine Chapel, or in almost impossible work of carving and shaping marble into unparalleled beauty. I would not even think of offering to help my wife design our own birthday card for my grandson. I certainly dare not think that I can contribute to what Christ has done to fulfill God's plan to save me. Jesus told me clearly how impossible it is to do anything when he spoke of the corruption that flows from the human heart. "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimonies, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean.'" All religions of the world teach there is something you can do to earn God's favor. Solomon prays there is no God like our God who keeps his covenant of love with his servants.

### **There is unlimited salvation for all people**

While there is only one true God and one way to be saved, this one true God wants all people to come to him and believe in him. Listen to this amazing prayer for all people that comes from King Solomon. "As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name-for men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm- when he comes and prays toward this temple, then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name."

Solomon sees people coming from all over the world to worship in the temple of the Lord. He sees them looking at the altar where sacrifices were made. He envisions them hearing the great songs that were sung by thousands of people in the temple courts. He imagines people smelling the smoke of sacrifices and seeing the blood sprinkled on the altar that pictured the blood of the Lamb of God that would pay for the sin of the world.

Was Solomon a foolish dreamer, or would people come from distant lands to learn more about the Lord and his salvation? The temple in Jerusalem was at that time the most important building in the world, because it was the only place to learn about the true God and his plan of salvation. Solomon longs for people who speak different languages and people with different clothing and different colors of skin to join in praying to the true God. Jesus told his disciples, "Go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey all things that he commanded us."

Your world view is the same as that of Solomon and of your Savior Jesus. You look at your

neighbors differently. You want them to share in that great masterpiece of salvation so carefully designed by your heavenly Father and then carefully crafted and completed by his Son. You look at your children and grandchildren differently. Nothing is more important to you than their faith in Jesus as their hope of eternal life. We pray for the Muslim world. We long for them to come to know the true God and pray in his name and find salvation in Christ. Solomon's prayer is our prayer. Solomon's world view is our world view. Amen.