

I Kings – Part 3

Building a House for God – I Kings 5-6; Exodus 25

The building of the Temple 950 years before the birth of Jesus is a high point in the history of God's people. (I Ki. 5-6). God had given instructions for the Tabernacle to provide so His people could worship Him after they escaped from Egypt. They had used it and carried it with them through their 40-year wilderness journey, but they had been settled for many years, yet it was still being used for their sacrifices.

David wanted something more for God because, he said, "I dwell in a house of cedar, and my God lives in a tent" (II Sam. 7:2). He wanted to build God a Temple. It was popular to build temples for the nation's gods. The tabernacle's temporary tent was impermanent. David wanted a centralized place in the nation where God's people could regularly come to meet God. In David's mind, God deserved better than his own luxurious house, but He said, "No," because David was a man of war and killing. So, in his final years, he devoted himself to preparing the task for his son. David couldn't build the Temple, but he could furnish the materials, so he dedicated himself to amassing the gold, silver, and brass that would be used.

With David's death, building the temple now falls onto the shoulders of King Solomon. The land was at rest from its enemies; things were peaceful. He realized his responsibility. Just as he had followed his father's suggestions to secure the throne, *behold*, he now set himself to the task of building the temple. But that was not the only reason. He saw it as an act of obedience and the fulfillment of God's promise to David. He was doing it because it was the right thing to do.

I. Help from Hiram

Soon after Solomon became king of Israel, Hiram, king of Tyre/Phoenicia, a city located on the coast in today's Lebanon, sent ambassadors to congratulate the young king. He had been a close friend and ally of David and had supplied him with timber for his palace in Jerusalem. (II Sam. 5:11). Solomon remembered this relationship, and since he was a great networker, he petitioned Hiram to supply him with timber, workers, and some of his finest artisans. (II Chr. 2:3). These would help gather and prepare the wood and stones needed for construction.

Lebanon was a mountain range in Phoenicia known as a high-quality source of cedar. Cedar was considered the best timber for building because it was a durable wood, resistant to insects and rot. The "fir" trees are thought to be cypress trees used in making musical instruments, doors, ceilings, and decks of ships. Would Hiram supply all the cedar and fir that was needed for the temple?

Solomon wasn't asking for charity, but said, "I will give thee hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint." He would supplement Hiram's workers with men from Israel, but Israel had no men who were as skilled in the felling of trees, cutting them into lumber, and transporting them in a way that kept them from being damaged as the men of Sidon, another coastal city in Phoenicia. When you need something of this quality, you go to the best!

These two kings and their nations were very different from each other. Although a king, Hiram ruled only locally over a city that maintained its own independent

government, navy, and trade empire. They were seafaring people with skilled shipbuilders and vast forests that they used for trade to Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia, and beyond. Their economic wealth came primarily from shipbuilding, luxury goods, and its overseas settlements along the Mediterranean and Red Sea routes.

Solomon ruled over an entire nation of unified tribes as a monarch. He ruled over both political and religious areas. Their identity was tied to the One True God with its oral Law. They relied on agriculture, livestock, and regional trade. While they traded in the Mediterranean markets, their economy was focused more on the land's production of grain and oil, with a large labor force that created massive public works and infrastructure projects but had limited naval abilities. The projected alliance created a strategic partnership: Hiram brought resources, ships, and expertise; Israel provided agricultural goods and stability by their support.

Hiram was pleased by Solomon's request. It's always nice to think that your people are the best! He praised the Lord for blessing David with such a wise son to inherit the throne from him. So, Hiram agreed to provide what Solomon needed for the Temple. Solomon would, in return, provide wheat and oil for payment and send a rotation of men to Tyre to help prepare the stones and timber for the construction.

II. Building from a Blueprint

On Mount Moriah, 480 years after Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, he began building the Temple. (I Ki. 6). This was a noted place of religious significance. Here, the angel of God had appeared to King David when the plague needed to be stopped. The prophet Gad told David to erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the place God had chosen for the Temple. (II Chr. 3:1; II Sam. 24:18-25). When God had asked Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, He had led him to Mount Moriah. Gen. 22:1-19).

God had given Moses a blueprint for the Tabernacle in the wilderness as a replica of the Temple in heaven. (Ex. 25:8-9). God was insistent that it be made *exactly* after the pattern He showed Moses on Mount Sinai. "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." (Ex. 25:40).

The Tabernacle and various Temples allowed by God represent God's dwelling among His people, but they differ in purpose, permanence, and scope. Man had no part in designing the structures; they only had to follow the blueprint. Using God's pattern was important because every part pointed to Christ and God's plan of salvation.

The **Tabernacle**, which measured 15' x 45' x 15' high, was a mobile, *temporary* dwelling place for Israel to experience God's presence during their wilderness journey. Its mobility reflected the transient nature of Israel's earthly life and its dependence on God's guidance. It consisted of a courtyard and a two-room tent. In the courtyard, the people brought their offerings, sacrifices, and animals to God for atonement on the bronze altar. Priests washed in the bronze basin because of the need for holiness in approaching God. It represents justification, the state of being made right with God. Only through faith in the shed blood of Jesus can we be made right in Him.

From the courtyard where the sin offerings were offered, the inner sanctuary could only be accessed by one door, the gateway of faith, because there is only one way by which we can approach God. The priests would enter the first room, the Holy Place, where the Lampstand, reminding us that Jesus is the Light of the World, Table of

Showbread, He is the Bread of Life, and the Altar of Incense reside. The Altar of Incense, placed before the veil separating the two rooms, symbolized the prayers of God's people rising before Him through Christ as the intercessor between God and man. All the furniture was gold, depicting the deity of Christ, but silver hooks, bands, and bases supported bronze pillars, showing that man had been redeemed and purified.

Behind the curtain, or veil, is the Holy of Holies, a replica of the throne of God where Cherubim continuously declare God's holiness. Everything in this area was gold. Notice the progression of the Tabernacle as it moves from bronze to silver to gold. It was a reminder that man was earthly and common, God was Sovereign. A purifying process must take place before we come face to face with Him. As our walk draws us closer to God, so our lives become purer and more holy.

Only the Holy Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, and only once a year. Here, the Ark of the Covenant, with the Mercy Seat, God's presence was manifested. Rising above "the Holy of Holies" in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, God provided visible evidence of His presence. Israel would see them and be reassured that God was among them.

Now, in I Kings 6-7, we see a quick overview of the pattern Solomon will use to build the **Temple** on Mount Zion. Although we don't know how this was accomplished, King David had been given this pattern by the Holy Spirit "in writing" (I Chron. 28:11-12, 19). It would be a more *permanent*, grander version of the Tabernacle. It was larger, more ornate, and fixed in one location. The addition of features like the two pillars (Jachin and Boaz) and expanded chambers reflected the maturity and stability of Israel's relationship with God. (I Ki. 7:21).

Like the Tabernacle, it was a replica of the heavenly sanctuary, with the outer courts, the Holy Place, and the Most Holy Place/Holy of Holies. Again, Solomon was to follow God's pattern exactly; nothing was left for David or Solomon to design. On the inside, the layout would remain the same as the Tabernacle but would be twice as large. It would be 90' x 30' x 45' high with a porch on the front. However, instead of the imagery shown through the bronze, silver, and gold, Solomon intentionally covered everything in pure gold. (I Ki. 6:20-22).

Gold's untarnished luster embodied divine glory, purity, and incorruptibility (Job 23:10; Ps. 19:9-10); its durability typified God's unchangeable holiness (Mal. 3:6; James 1:17). The polished surfaces reflected and magnified light, creating an other-worldly radiance when the Temple was lit with the lamps, reinforcing the idea that worship was heavenly in character. In the Ancient Near East, only kings possessed large quantities of gold. By overlaying the sanctuary in gold, Solomon asserted God as king over Israel and all nations (Ps. 24:7-10).

When Solomon dedicated the Temple at Jerusalem, God's glory appeared as a bright shining light, so bright that the priests could not enter the Temple. (I Ki. 8:10-11; II Chr. 7:1-2). God's presence would remain until the time of King Zedekiah and Ezekiel. When the Babylonians carried the Jews captive to Babylon and burned the Temple (Ezek. 21:25-27), His presence was removed.

Looking forward, God showed that another blueprint was drafted for a Temple that will be used after the Tribulation, during the millennial reign of Jesus. Ezekiel 40-43

describes this **Millennial Temple** in detail. The throne of David will again be established in earthly Jerusalem with Christ physically seated upon it during His 1,000-year reign. Here, the nations will come to worship, bring offerings, and enjoy the presence of God. These offerings will be used to beautify the Temple and regather Israel. (Ezek. 40-47). God's glory will be so evident in Jerusalem that there will be no need for the sun or moon because "the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory" (Isa. 60:1-20). We'll look at this later in our Walk Thru the Word.

The Millennial Temple will be *temporary* until the ultimate, *eternal* dwelling place in the "new heavens and new earth" of Revelation 21-22. This final **Heavenly Temple** will come after the Millennium, when death and the curse are removed. It will not be a physical building, but a spiritual reality where God's glory will be fully manifested as He dwells intimately with His redeemed creation forever. It will be a fuller, more glorious fulfillment of the Tabernacle and other Temples; its dimensions and features will be beyond any of its earthly pictures. The river that flows through it symbolizes the life-giving presence of God; the Holy of Holies is the very throne of God.

God began His story dwelling with His people in Eden, so it will be completed as He dwells with believers forever in perfect peace. His dwelling place will expand to fill the heavens and the earth.

III. Building God's House

What a huge amount of planning went into the Temple Solomon was building for God! Even though God had given the blueprint, there were lots of pieces to the puzzle that needed to be put into place. The Tabernacle had only taken a year to construct, but the Temple will take seven years. Since II Chronicles 2 provides similar details about the preparation and construction found here in I Kings 6-7, we will only look at a few of the highlights in this lesson.

Solomon had commissioned help from King Hiram, King David had supplied the precious metals, but Solomon would need to supply the men—30,000 cutting timber in Lebanon, 80,000 cutting stone, and 70,000 more laborers and overseers. Solomon saw the need to rotate the workers in a 3-month cycle, one month on the Temple project and two months at home, so that work and rest could be balanced and no single tribe bore the burden of the labor. This rest period helped prevent burnout and maintained enthusiasm for the task, keeping them from feeling like it was forced labor.

After years of national preparation on the part of David and Israel herself, the construction of the house of God began in the month of Zif, or April in our time. This was not an ordinary building—it was the earthly representation of God's dwelling among His people. Every measurement, material, and instruction was carried out with intentionality, order, and reverence. Solomon was not just building something impressive; he was building something sacred. His obedience to following the divine patterns was a testimony of his honor for God. The temple, which symbolized God's presence, power, and holiness, was not merely a structure—it was a declaration that Israel belonged to God.

Solomon was careful to reverence and obey. He allowed God to determine the timing. He didn't rush ahead of God, but waited until peace, materials, and plans were completely in place. Obedience isn't just doing what is right but includes when and

how we obey. Timing is as important as planning. Even though Jesus was “obedient unto death” (Phil. 2:5-7), He had to wait until “His hour was come” before going to the cross. (Jn. 13:1).

All the stones needed for the building were fashioned off-site to avoid noise. “There was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building” (I Ki. 6:7). Everything was done with reverence and stillness. (Hab. 2:20). Noise represents confusion; silence reflects order and honor. Only the task of setting the pieces in place was done at the site on Mount Moriah. Holiness is not just what we say but how we act and build our lives. This is a good reminder that we should not allow the noise of the world (our cellphones or other distractions) to intrude in our worship. It should only be disturbed by our testimony, praise, and worship. Unseemly noise should be left outside!

The inner rooms of the sanctuary held the Holy of Holies and the Holy Place like the Tabernacle, but the Temple also held chambers and storerooms along the outside of the building, which were not part of the Tabernacle, along with both an outer and inner court. It was three stories high, tiered in such a way that there was no need to nail them. The timbers for the upper levels were supported by narrow rests in the rooms below. Windows with beveled frames provided light. A winding stairway gave access to the upper levels. (I Ki. 6:5-8).

Then, “The word of the LORD came to Solomon...” (I Ki. 6:11-13). In the middle of all the busyness of construction, God’s voice breaks through to encourage him...but also to remind him that without obedience to His instructions, all the work that was being put into this building would be futile. So, in the center, placed there deliberately by God, is the whole point of the passage. “If you walk in My statutes...then I will dwell among you” (I Ki. 6:12-13).

Obedience invites God’s presence, which was only assured if they obeyed. He didn’t care how beautiful the building was. “Concerning *this house* [not My house] that you are building...” In fact, God didn’t even want a building, David did! The Temple was a symbol of God’s presence; it was no guarantee of it. What was important to God was the purity and obedience of His people; He wanted their heart. His promise to remain with them was conditional—“If...then.” When Israel turned to idolatry, God departed. (Eze. 10:18-19).

“So, Solomon built the house and finished it” (I Ki. 6:14). The stonework was completed. The whole inside of the building, from top to bottom, walls and ceilings were covered by boards of cedar, and the floor was covered with pine wood so that none of the stonework showed. The walls had carvings of cherubim, knops (gourds), and open flowers that would all be covered in gold. The intention was probably, with its glory and beauty, to convey the idea of creation as seen in the Garden of Eden and remind them that God was their Creator.

Once it was completed, two 15’ tall cherubim were set within the Most Holy Place, standing beside each other with their wings outstretched, so that one wing of one cherub touched one wing of the other, and their other wing reached out to touch the wall. Between them was the Ark of the Covenant. Unlike the cherubim on the Ark whose wings were spread upward and shadowed the Mercy Seat, facing each other, these huge cherubim looked out towards the curtain/veil in a way that no one would dare come through the curtain.

In addition to these cherubim and the veil separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place, folding doors separated the two areas. Folding doors also covered the entrance to the Holy Place. Only the priests were allowed past these barriers to perform their duties.

The Temple took seven years and six months to build. It was the perfect period set by God. What was started in the month of Zif (April) which means “flowers,” was completed in the month of Bul (Oct./Nov.), meaning “moisture,” the rainy season.

Conclusion:

What was designed to bring God to man, though, effectively confined Him, at least in the people’s mind, to a box, away from them. The Temple that our Lord designed would never fulfill what His desire was. When Jesus came, that was problem was taken away. He walked bodily with His people for 3 years before He was taken away, but Praise the Lord, He brought something better. He now lives within those who have accepted Him as the Savior.

Until Christ’s return, our bodies are the Temple of God. We are part of the Church, a holy temple built “upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:20-22). “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (I Pet. 2:5). “By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb. 13:15-16).

As a living Temple, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, we should live holy lives, separate from sin. When we allow sin to control us, we offend the presence of God within our lives. The consequences can be severe (I Cor. 11:30-32). God chastens those He loves when we embrace sin. He won’t abandon us, but He will correct us. Do you need to shore up some trouble spots in your life, do a little repair work, and fix those problems?

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon” (I Cor. 3:10). Because we have the Holy Spirit within us, we should take heed of our actions. “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Cor. 6:19-20).

Dwelling in Jerusalem (I Kings Part 4)

1) Read I Kings 7-9. What other building projects did Solomon do? How would you describe his work?

2) How did Solomon celebrate the completion of the Temple?

3) What was in the Ark? What had been put in the Ark? (Heb. 9:4) What do you think causes the discrepancy?

4) How did God manifest His presence in the Temple?

5) Stop and read I Kings 8:23 slowly and think about what it is telling you. Break it apart into phrases. Write in your own words what this personally means to you. How should this affect the way you live?

6) I Kings 8:27 asks some questions that includes the word “behold.” Highlight the word “behold” here. Stop and think about what the verse is trying to get you to pay attention to. What was God’s purpose?

7) What was God's purpose in appearing to Solomon in I Kings 9?

Conclusion:

Sometimes we go to church and our focus is anywhere but on worshipping and praising God. We may be trying to remember if we turned the oven on, or we're having company and wondering if the kids picked up their pajamas, or something to remember to add to the grocery list, or distracting ourselves by looking at Facebook or some other social media. Is that you?

When Solomon dedicated the Temple and God manifested Himself, His glory was so bright that they could not minister there. Exodus 24:17 says that God's glory is "like devouring fire" and Deuteronomy 4:24 describes it as "a consuming fire." As such, shouldn't we be paying more attention to why we are at church, or why we are ministering to someone, or even what we're thinking about when we are reading and studying His Word?

At the dedication of the Temple, Solomon reflected on how his father David had longed to build the Temple, but was forbidden by the Lord. Is your life being lived so that nothing can stop you from serving where God wants you to, or are you just living the way you want and not God's way?

Just some things to consider about your daily walk. How are you doing? Walking with God is a lifestyle, not a single "one and done" time. We need to consistently be striving to live in obedience and reverence to Him.

"And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself" (I Kings 2:3).