

(1 Kings) Building Temples

by David Guzik

David Guzik's sermon explores the significance of the temple's construction by Solomon and its implications for individual Christians and the church today.

Duration: 1:02:41

Scripture: 1 Kings 5:15, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Ephesians 2:19-21

Topics: "Temple Worship", "Godly Leadership"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the completion of the temple that Solomon built according to God's instructions. The speaker highlights the attention to detail and the use of costly materials in the construction of the temple. Adoniram, a leader appointed by Solomon, delegated authority and managed the labor force effectively. The speaker emphasizes the importance of maintaining a good relationship with God, as the glory of the temple was dependent on it.

Transcript

Tonight, we're going to consider actually three chapters from the book of First Kings, and they're all around the theme of building the temple. This of course was the great accomplishment of Solomon's reign. Solomon, as we discussed last time together, Solomon's reign was sort of a golden age for the kingdom of Israel, and the greatest accomplishment of this reign was the building of the temple before this time.

For some 450 years of Israel's history in the promised land, they had no temple, they had a tabernacle. A tabernacle is, if you will, sort of a portable temple. It functions as a temple functions as a place of sacrifice, a place of worship, a place of atonement, but it is not a permanent building, it's a tent, which was perfect for Israel in the wilderness, because they traveled from place to place.

They couldn't have built a temple at Sinai, because they moved from place to place, but yet it was more than 400 years after coming into the promised land that they finally got around to building a temple, and it seems that God just ordained both David, as it was in his heart before Solomon, to build the temple, and then his son Solomon to actually do it. We remind ourselves that the vision to build the temple did not begin with Solomon. It began with his father David, and David, as we're told in both 2 Samuel and the book of 1 Chronicles, David had a passion, number one, to purchase, to find and to purchase, I should say, the place to have the temple, and that is on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and then secondly, David amassed most of the materials to build the temple.

David planned it all out, and he let his son do it. So anyway, before we jump into the text here of 1 Kings chapter 5, I do want to remind you of an important principle of considering the temple from a New Testament perspective, and that's simply it. The Bible relates the temple, the physical temple, both in the days of Solomon and then what we call the second temple, the temple that would have been existing in the days of Jesus.

The Bible relates the idea of the temple both to the individual Christian and to the body of Christ as a whole. In other words, the Bible says to the individual Christian, you are like the temple. Maybe we should just take a look at a passage like that.

You could keep your finger here in 1 Kings 5, because of course that's what we're going to come back to, but turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 3, and again, we're doing this because I think as we look at this, we're not looking at it tonight just to sort of some interesting facts about the construction of an ancient building, but God has something to teach us about our individual lives and about the body of Christ through the way that Solomon built the temple. 1 Corinthians chapter 3, beginning now at verse 16, he says, Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? And if anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

And he's speaking to Christians individually there. You are like a temple. And of course, the analogy makes some sense there.

You've been created by God. You're wholly unto God. The Spirit of God dwells in you.

So these things remind us of the principles of the temple. Now, let's take a look at just one other quick New Testament passage relevant to this, and that would be Ephesians chapter 2, beginning at verse 19. Now, I'm just picking out two passages.

There are actually several passages throughout the New Testament that speak of this likeness between the temple and the body of Christ or the individual Christian life. Ephesians chapter 2, verse 19. He says, Now, therefore, you're no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone in whom the whole building being fitted together grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom also you are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

So you get this idea, don't you? That not only is the individual Christian life as a temple, but also the body of Christ collectively. That's the idea there in Ephesians chapter 2, that we together as individual pieces are being built as a holy temple unto the Lord. So, again, as we consider this building of the temple tonight, as Solomon did in his day, we want to think about this.

What does this show us about the way that God wants to build in my individual life? But then also, how does God want to build us collectively as the body of Christ? All right, back to first Kings chapter five, verse one. Now, Hiram, king of Tyre, sent his servants to Solomon because he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father. For Hiram had always loved David.

Isn't that remarkable? This was a pagan king, Hiram of Tyre. Tyre, of course, would have been the area today that we would call Lebanon, just north of Israel. This man, Hiram, was a pagan king, yet him and David had a good relationship.

It should remind us, David was a mighty warrior against the enemies of Israel, but he did not regard every neighbor nation as an enemy. He didn't automatically say, you're a pagan nation, you're my neighbor, you're my enemy. No, he was willing to be at peace with them and he was willing to be friends with them if they were willing also.

And so David wisely built alliances and friendships with neighbor nations, and this also benefited his son Solomon. So we learn about this love that Hiram had for David now in verse two. Then Solomon sent to Hiram saying, you know how my father David could not build a house for the name of the Lord as God because of the wars which were fought against him on every side until the Lord put his foes under the soles of his feet.

But now the Lord, my God has given me rest on every side. There is neither adversary nor evil occurrence. And behold, I propose to build a house for the name of the Lord, my God, as the Lord spoke to my father, David saying, your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he shall build a house, the house for my name.

Now, therefore command that they cut down cedars for me from Lebanon and my servants will be with your servants and I will pay you wages for your servants according to whatever you say. For you know that there is none among us who has skilled to cut timber like the Sidonians. So Solomon prepared a letter and sent it to this King Hiram of Lebanon or Tyre to the north of Israel.

Interesting. Have you heard of this ancient Jewish historian Josephus? Josephus says that copies of this letter, copies of this correspondence between Solomon and Tyre, that it was preserved and that it existed in archives even unto his day. We don't have independent copies of this correspondence, but Josephus says that it existed even in his day.

And so Solomon relates in this letter how David, his father could not build a house for the name of the Lord. It is God. Now, interesting about this.

First of all, just the principle. If you remember the story from second Samuel, David wanted to build God a temple. It's really a beautiful story from the pages of second Samuel.

David built himself a wonderful palace and he's enjoying his palace one day, walking around, you know, enjoying the beautiful building. And then he looks over and he thinks about where the Ark of the Covenant is. And he thinks, I live in a great palace, but God lives in a tent.

And he goes, it's not right. I need to build a tent. Excuse me.

I need to build a temple. God already had a tent. He said, I need to build a temple for the Lord, a magnificent building that would be befitting the God of Israel.

And so David talks to his friend Nathan and he says, Nathan, I want to do this. I want to build a temple for the Lord. And that's a great idea.

Why don't you go do it? But then Nathan has to come back to David and say, wait a minute. I spoke too soon. God told me that you're not the one to build him a house.

Instead, your son will build him a house. And then God made David one of the most beautiful promises in the Old Testament. He said, David, I'm not going to let you build me a house, but I am going to build you a

house.

And right there, God promised David that the Messiah would come through his line, that he would be an ancestor of the Messiah. And you have to regard this as one of the most remarkable promises that was ever made a particular individual in the scriptures because of all the messianic titles that the Messiah has. You know, Jesus was the ancestor of Noah, but he's not called the son of Noah.

He was the, excuse me, the ancestor, the descendant of Noah. Jesus was the descendant of Abraham, but he's not called the son of Abraham. Jesus is called the son of David.

And that was part of this special promise that God made to David. Well, nevertheless, we're reminded of this whole incident when David wanted to build a temple, but God said, no, David, you're a man of war. You're a warrior.

I want a man of peace to build the temple unto me. And that would be his son Solomon. Now we understand the story back from second Samuel, but what's also remarkable here is in verse three, Solomon says, you know how my father David, in other words, Solomon knows that Hiram knows the story from the mouth of David.

David was free and open in sharing this story with a pagan king. Isn't that wonderful? David didn't just talk about spiritual things with other Israelites. He talked about spiritual things with unbelievers.

And this is an example of how he spoke with this pagan King Hiram, who was his friend. And so he says, no, God gave this work to David to do, but it would not be, excuse me, this work for David put it on David's heart, but David would not perform the work that would be done in the day of one of his sons. I also find it interesting here.

How, um, in verse five here, Solomon says, and behold, I propose to build a house for the name of the Lord. My God, isn't that interesting how he doesn't directly say, I want to build a house for the Lord, but he says, I want to build a house for the name of the Lord. This is a traditional Hebrew way of speaking that demonstrates reverence to God in the Hebrew mind.

You demonstrate reverence to God by not referring to him directly, but indirectly it's as if God is so Holy that you don't want to refer to him directly. Have you ever, ever seen it in an Orthodox Jewish publication today, how they don't spell out the word God, they will put G dash D and they'll leave out the O. Now, why do they do that? Because they want to avoid a direct reference to God, because in their mind, it shows reverence. You see the very beginning of this idea way back in the days of Solomon, Solomon says, I'm going to build a house for the name of the Lord.

But here, I want you to send something else. It was not only out of reverence, but it was also because Solomon had a sophisticated spiritual understanding of what that temple would be about. It was not actually going to be the house where Yahweh lived, right? It was not actually going to be his palace or whatever.

Solomon understood that it was more a memorial unto God rather than his actual residence. He understood, as it is said in other places in the scriptures, that God cannot dwell in a building made with hands, that he's too great for that. But that again, this temple would be a memorial unto his name.

And so Solomon says to his friend Hiram, who lived in Lebanon or Tyre, cut down for me cedars from Lebanon. The cedar trees of Lebanon were legendary for their excellent timber. And this tells us that Solomon wanted the temple to be built out of the best materials possible.

Isn't that the way that God builds in our individual lives? And when he builds his church as well, he wants to use the best materials possible. Solomon said, get me the finest wood made by the finest craftsmen. But notice this as well.

He was willing to have Gentile wood made by Gentile craftsmen to be built in the temple. Doesn't that almost seem that it wouldn't be right for the temple, right? It would almost seem like, oh, no, no, no. This is the holy, holy temple.

You can only use wood that grew in the promised land. You can only use timber that was fashioned by a holy craftsman. And Solomon said, no, no, no.

This is God's house. It's going to have the finest timber. And if it's Gentile timber, then we'll use it.

If it's shaped by Gentile craftsmen, then that's what we're going to use. But God uses Gentile and Jew together in the making of this temple. We see here sort of a reference long, long time before the church was ever made about the actual building of the church, which is, for example, a temple made of both Jew and Gentile.

So in verse seven, we consider Hiram's reply to Solomon, where it says, so it was when Hiram heard the words of Solomon that he rejoiced greatly and said, blessed be the Lord this day, for he's given David a wise son over his great people. Then Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I've considered the message which you've sent me, and I'll do all that you desire concerning the cedar and the Cypress logs. My servant shall bring them down from Lebanon to the sea.

I will float them in rafts by the sea to the place you indicate to me, and I will have them broken apart there. Then you can take them away and you shall fulfill my desire by giving food for my household. Then Hiram gave Solomon cedar and Cypress logs according to all his desire.

And Solomon gave Hiram 20,000 cores of wheat as food for his household and 20 cores of pressed oil. Thus Solomon gave to Hiram year by year. So the Lord gave Solomon wisdom as he had promised him.

And there was peace between Hiram and Solomon and the two of them made a treaty together. Now, we don't know if Hiram was a saved man. That would be a good debate to consider for yourself.

You should look him up when you get to heaven to see if Hiram made it to heaven. He does say, blessed be the Lord God this day. But he may have been speaking just out of respect for the Lord.

It may not be that he was a saved man. Nonetheless, he did respect God and he revered him. And he made this arrangement with Solomon.

I'll provide you the wood. You provide food for my household. Hiram expected to be paid for his service, but it was a fair wage.

They were able to work it out as good, honest men between them. And as it says, there was peace between Hiram and Solomon. Well, you don't just need materials to build a temple, do you? You need workmen as well.

So we consider the workmen beginning here at verse 13. Then King Solomon raised up a labor force out of all Israel. And the labor force was 30,000 men.

And he sent them to Lebanon, 10,000 a month in shifts. And they were one, one, one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the labor force.

Now this was the labor force of volunteers in the following verses. We're going to have the labor force of the slaves, but you have to admit that this was a huge labor force, 30,000 men, which shows it could only happen when the, uh, nation or the kingdom of Israel was at peace. You can't afford to set aside 30,000 men to build a temple when you're busy fighting wars.

This was one reason why God wanted a man of peace to build the temple, because it had to be done at a time when Israel enjoyed this peace around its neighbors. So for that was one of the reasons why it was more fitting for Solomon to build it rather than David. And then they made this man Adoniram in charge of the labor force.

Again, I want you to see some of the wisdom of Solomon at work. He delegated responsibility to men like Adoniram who was in charge of the labor force, Solomon. No, Adoniram, he took authority and he delegated it, but it also shows wisdom in that he did not work these Israelites too hard.

We have this indication for us here in verse 14, that they, uh, worked in shifts of 10 months instead of making the Israelites work constantly away from Israel and away from home. He rotated them through. Isn't it a very smart way to do the labor.

And so Solomon demonstrates that he's using wisdom and skill and resourcefulness in the building of the temple, but they also use many slaves in the building of the temple. Verse 15, Solomon had 70,000 who carried burdens and 80,000 who quarried stone in the mountains. Besides 3,300 from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies who supervise the people who labored in the work.

And the king commanded them to quarry large stones, costly stones, and hewn stones to lay the foundation of the temple. So Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the Gabilites queried them and they prepared the timber and the stones to build the temple. This seems to describe this great number, 70,000 carried burdens and 80,000 who quarried the stone.

This seems to describe the number of Canaanite slave laborers that Solomon used. And so these were subjugated nations around Israel. This was a time of military strength and dominance.

This was a forced labor team that was required to work as slave laborers in those days. I think it's also interesting that what you would call in the business world, he had a middle management, you know, you have the, the workers themselves, and then you have the upper layers of management. Then you have a middle layer of management.

It seems right here that it discusses that middle management group. When it talks about Solomon's deputies who supervise the people who labored in the work. I find it very interesting here.

How in chapter five, verse 17, it talks about using costly stones. Now, literally in the Hebrew, it's quality stones. The idea is very close.

They're costly or quality. It shows that Solomon used high quality materials, even in the foundation where the stones could not be seen. Now, if you go to Jerusalem today, which is a wonderful trip to take in the sea, Jerusalem, one of the places you really must see is you should go down the rabbi's tunnel and see some of the foundation stones to the retaining wall that they made for the second temple.

Now, again, the stones, the remains from Solomon's temple cannot be seen, but from the temple that came after Solomon's temple, Herod's temple, the temple that existed in the days of Jesus, you can see some of the foundation stones that they used for the retaining wall there. I tell you, they're absolutely unbelievable. You see stones, huge stones that are about as big as the wall behind you, about as big as the glass wall behind you in that dimension and going back, oh, it must be five or six meters.

Unbelievably huge stones, precision cut, put into place. You have stones in there that are so big today that very few modern cranes can lift them and put them into place. And it's absolutely amazing to see.

And then when you look at these stones, and this was just for the retaining wall, this was not for the building itself. You see a very nice carved border made around each stone. And you can tell that at one time it was polished and looked beautiful.

Now, again, that wasn't Solomon's temple, but Solomon followed the same philosophy. He used quality or costly stones, even in the foundation. I want you to think about something before we jump over to chapter six.

Doesn't that speak about the way that we should work for God? Even at the very foundations of our work, the things that cannot be seen, we should work with excellence unto the Lord. We don't work for the Lord for appearance only, but even in the deep and hidden things. Isn't it a great temptation for our lives to worry only about what our Christian life looks like, not about what it actually is.

To look at what the Christian life looks like on the outside. That would be like just worrying about what the outside of the temple looked like. Solomon said, no, I want to build it with quality stones, even at the foundation.

But it also speaks to the way that God works in us. God works in you and in me, in the deep, hidden things. Other people may only be concerned with superficial appearances, but you know that's not the way God works in your life.

He brings you down to a deep death of self, doesn't he? You would prefer sometimes that he would only work on the superficial things. That God would just care about the surface-y things that other people can see, but you know that's the way, you know that God does not work that way in your life. You know that he works in these deep, hidden things, but it also speaks to the way that God builds the church.

God wants to build the church by doing a work of deep, strong, quality foundations. Instead of having a work that's a mile wide and an inch deep, God wants it to be deep and filled with quality. And so I think even in these descriptions of the way that Solomon built the temple, we see how God works in our life and how he wants to work in the church.

All right, now on to chapter six, where we continue along very much along the same theme. Here we read in the first six verses, and it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month which is the second month that he began to build the house of the Lord. Now the house which King Solomon built

for the Lord, its length was sixty cubits, its width twenty, and its height thirty cubits.

The vestibule in front of the sanctuary of the house was twenty cubits long across the width of the house, and the width of the vestibule extended ten cubits from the front of the house. And he made for the house windows with beveled frames. Against the wall of the temple he built chambers all around, against the walls of the temple all around the sanctuary and the inner sanctuary.

Thus he made side chambers all around it. The lowest chamber was five cubits wide, the middle was six cubits wide, and the third was seven cubits wide, for he made narrow ledges around the outside of the temple so that the support beams would not be fastened into the walls of the temple. Well, the first thing we're given in this section is a time marker.

We're told that it was four hundred and eighty years from the time that Israel came into the land to the time that somebody actually came and started the work of building the temple. I have to say that I don't think this is a black mark against Israel. I don't think God was saying, when is somebody going to build me a temple? No, I think that it was just simply in the timing.

It also shows that the building of the temple was not so much out of necessity, out of it was deep heart for God. The tabernacle did in fact serve Israel's needs fine, but God put it on the heart of David and his son after him to build the house of the Lord. And so it was in these times, it says there, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel that he began to build the temple.

Now, what's interesting is that there is some evidence, both from tradition and some rabbinical commentaries, that this work with Hiram in assembling the wood to build the temple, that that began and it took three years to bring that work until there was enough suitable wood to begin the construction, which would tell us that Solomon began the work of building the temple in the first year of his reign. And after three years, he had enough materials assembled to begin the construction. And then it was in the fourth year that the actual construction began.

Solomon had a sense of urgency about building the temple and he got down to it right away. If you want to find something very interesting here, keep your finger here in first Kings chapter six, turn over to first Chronicles chapter 28, verse 11. That tells us something about David's connection with all of this.

And I just want you to remember that even though the attention is all upon Solomon here, David sort of stands as the shadow over this. The deceased former King David is a shadow over all of this work. First Chronicles chapter 28, verses 11 and 12 tells us this.

Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule. It's houses, it's treasuries, it's upper chambers, it's interchangers chambers and the place of the mercy seat and the plans for all that he had by the spirit of the courts of the house of the Lord of all the chambers around of the treasuries of the house of God and the treasuries for the dedicated things. Isn't that interesting? It tells us, first of all, that David gave Solomon the plans, but it also tells them that David came to the plans by the spirit of God.

In other words, the Holy Spirit was guiding it. Well, now that's good architecture and draftsmanship for you, isn't it? I mean, the Holy Spirit was guiding David in the direction of this, by the way, as it talks about the different components of the building chambers and vestibules and porches as you might imagine, many people have sought to sort of reconstruct this on paper or in some kind of actual model. It's not clear enough to be definitive exactly what it looked like.

I've seen several different possible constructions of what exactly we know about what this looked like, but not exactly. The basic temple itself was well, the temple proper. In other words, the house which King Solomon built was divided into two rooms.

There was the holy place and the most holy place. It was just modeled very much on the idea of the tabernacle, except made larger. And then there was a vestibule or entrance hall on the east side of the temple.

It was 30 feet or 10 meters wide and five meters deep. And it was the same height as the temple proper. And then there were chambers all around.

And then there was a courtyard surrounding the whole structure. It also gives us some indication of the dimensions in this, of this building, which tells us that it was about 30 meters high, excuse me, 30 meters long, 30 meters wide and about no, excuse me, 30 meters long, 10 meters high and about 15 meters. Can I begin one more time? It was about 30 meters long, about 10 meters wide and about 15 meters high.

I think we have it there finally. 30 long, 10 wide, 15 high. Now, if you think about a building that size, the first thing that strikes you, that's not especially large, is it? That's not larger than the sanctuary that I have right behind me, right here.

The glory of Solomon's temple was not in its size. The glory of Solomon's temple was in the quality and in the beauty of its construction and in the God who dwelt in it. That's something to remember because isn't it that way about God's work in us and in his church as a whole? The glory isn't that, you know, the great size of his church.

Matter of fact, the Bible tells us that many are called and few are chosen and it's more who go under the road to destruction than the road to salvation. No, the glory of Solomon's temple was not that it was the largest building in the world at that time or any such thing, but rather of its glory and its beauty in the quality and in the greatness of its construction. So, it also tells us by the basic dimensions that Solomon followed the basic pattern of the tabernacle.

He made it larger, but it was the same basic idea. Solomon didn't say, hey, let's do something, let's make it round, you know, let's make a sphere or a square. No, it's the same basic idea as the tabernacle just made in permanent stone and a bit larger.

With verse 7, we come into some of the details of the construction. It says, and the temple when it was being built was built with stone finished at the quarry so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built. The doorway for the middle story was on the right side of the temple.

They went up by the stairs to the middle story and from the middle to the third. So, he built the temple and finished it and he paneled the temple with beams and boards of cedar and he built side chambers against the entire temple, each by cubits high. They were attached to the temple with cedar beams.

Isn't that interesting? No hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built. In other words, the stones that were used to build the temple were all cut and prepared at another site. They were transported then to the temple and then just put in place.

Now, this shows you, that they had skilled engineers in the operation because they didn't have to touch up the stone once it got to the temple building site. It said, okay, this is stone 34C. It goes in the slot for stone 34C.

You'd think they must have had German craftsmen there doing that work, right? It was just done precisely. It was done just exactly the way that it should have been done. Listen here, I think, though, this idea here, that at the temple site, there wasn't the sound of the hammer or the chisel.

Again, it speaks to us about the way that God wants his work done. The temple had to be built with human labor. God wasn't going to send down a team of angels with laser beams and ray guns to do the work.

No, Solomon, however, did not want the sound of man's work to dominate the site of the temple. His idea is, look, I know it's human labor building this, but when you go to the temple building site, I don't want the impression to be, look at the great work of man. I want people to be thinking about God.

And so you chisel the stone, you prepare the stone somewhere else, and you bring them here and just put them into place. It also speaks to us about the way God works in his people. Often the greatest work in God's people happens quietly.

This was a tremendous work of God that was done at the temple, but it was done quietly. But it was only quiet at the temple because it was noisy in the quarry. The hidden place, there was a lot of working being done, but there at the temple site, it all was assembled quietly.

It speaks also to God's work in the church. You see, God wants to shape us down here so that we'll fit in up there. Do you feel like God's chiseling away at your life, that he's carving and shaping, and if that stone could cry out every time the chisel came down upon it, every time the hammer struck its blow, it would say, ouch, stop that.

But there is a great reason for that. It's to be quiet there so that when it's assembled in God's temple, it'll fit in perfectly. God's doing the same work in you right here.

Now, when you're assembled into your place, into the house of God in heaven, there's no chiseling up there, is there? It's all quiet up there. You're just put into your place beautifully shaped, properly shaped, but down here, here's the quarry. Up there, that's the temple that God assembles us into.

In any regard, it wasn't just about stone at the temple. It also says that he paneled the temple with beams and boards of cedar. He used the finest building materials available, and then he built side chambers around the temple.

And so now, verse 13, God makes a great promise to Solomon. He says, then the word of the Lord came to Solomon saying concerning this temple, which you are building. If you walk in my statutes, execute my judgments, keep all my commandments and walk in them.

Then I will perform my word to you, which I spoke to your father David, and I will dwell among the children of Israel and will not forsake my people Israel. Now, this was a conditional promise to Solomon and his descendants. If you walk in my statutes, Solomon, if you obey me, if you follow me the way that I have told you to, then you will enjoy this blessing.

If not, then you will face judgment. And of course, as long as Solomon and his descendants did follow in this path, then they did enjoy the blessing of God. But they did not always do this.

God promised an obedient Solomon that he would reign and be blessed and that he would fulfill all the promises that God made to David. He also promised that his special presence would remain among Israel as a nation. But God says, no, no, no, no.

This is conditional upon your obedience. But of course, the greatest part of the promise is there in verse 13, where he says, and I will dwell among the children of Israel. God was careful to say that he would not live in the temple the way the pagans thought that their gods lived in the temple.

He would dwell in the temple. No, he would dwell among the children of Israel. Listen, it's not so much that the temple was a special place for God.

The temple was a special place for man. It was a special place for man to meet with God. God didn't need the temple, but man needed the temple.

And that's why God instructed David and Solomon to build it. Well, we have here in this section of verses 14 through 38, a very large section which basically just describes in great detail the building of the temple. It begins here in verse 14.

So Solomon built the temple and finished it, and he built the inside walls of the temple with cedar boards from the floor of the temple to the ceiling. He paneled the inside with wood and he covered the floor of the temple with planks of cypress. Then he built the 20 cubit room at the rear of the temple from floor to ceiling with cedar boards, and he built it inside as the inner sanctuary, as the most holy place.

And then it just goes on to describe different details of the construction all the way through to verse 38. Instead of reading the whole text, let me just point out a few highlights along the way here. Well, right here we see that special attention was given to the holy place.

It was a particular cube made place and it well, look at this verse 21. So Solomon overlaid the inside of the temple with pure gold. He stretched gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary and overlaid it with gold.

These were gold chains across the veil that separated the holy place from the most holy place. And then verse 23 describes inside the inner sanctuary. He made two cherubim of olive wood, each 10 cubits high.

And so he made these large sculptures, cherubim of olive wood, probably overlaid with gold that were there in the most holy place. The psychology of walking into the temple was that you were in heaven, that you were in the throne room of God and the cherubim, which actually and in fact surround the throne of God, were artistically pictured around you. And they're symbolizing or indicating the throne of God behind the veil was the Ark of the Covenant itself.

But inside you would see gold all around and the artistic representations of cherubim. Now, when you think of cherubim, don't think of fat little babies with wings. This is a medieval conception of what a cherub is.

These were glorious, fearful creatures. The Bible has a hard time describing them to us. They seem to represent the glory of all creation.

The excellence of every kind of created being is summed up within the cherubim. And these beings do nothing morning, noon and night except worship God and honor him around his throne. But as it says in the floor of the temple, verse 30, he overlaid with gold.

You walked into the temple and it was gold everywhere. An absolutely amazing building. Verse 29 tells us he carved all the walls of the temple all around both the inner and the outer sanctuaries with the carved figures of cherubim, palm trees and open flowers.

And then it says in verse 36 about building the inner court. Again, the temple also had courts outside the actual building. There was the great court where the people came to pray.

Outside of it was the court for women. And then outside of that was the court of the Gentiles. And you must always be remembered that under the old covenant, the temple was not only for the people or was not for the people of Israel.

The temple was for the priests of Israel. You, a common Israelite, if you were one back in those days, you couldn't just walk into the temple and say, Hey, I'd love to see the place. You know, when did they have the tour? When are the tour times of the temple inside? May I take pictures inside here? Well, yes, but no flash or something like that.

You couldn't do that in those days. Of course, the temple was not for the people. It was for the priests, the courtyards around the temple.

Those were for the people. Verse 38 tells us that it was well in the 11th year in the month of bull, which is the eighth month. The house was finished in all its details and according to all its plans.

So he was seven years in building it. When the temple was finished, it was a spectacular building. Absolutely spectacular.

Perhaps one of the most glorious buildings on the earth at that time. And of course, having such a spectacular building as the temple, it provided a great temptation to Israel. It was possible for them to focus upon the temple of God instead of upon the God of the temple.

You see, what made the temple glorious was a good relationship with God. Without that good relationship with God, the glory of the would soon fade. The glorious temple of Solomon was plundered.

It wasn't destroyed, but many of its glorious pieces were removed just five years after his death. Do you see how glorious it is described here? It didn't last long. I'm not saying that it turned into a piece of junk.

It wasn't a terrible place. But there was a definite step back in the glory of the temple just five years after the death of Solomon. And so it's sobering to consider that, isn't it? That these things man makes, it's very easy for things to become idols in our mind.

I think about it in particular in the days of Jesus. You know, in the days of Jesus, there was a great idolatry of the temple. It could be argued that the temple that Herod made, if you want a quick history of the temple, Solomon built this temple.

It existed for, oh, three, four hundred years, and then it was destroyed by the Babylonians. After 70 years, Ezra and a group of godly people a small group of those who had been carried away to Babylon came

back to Jerusalem and they rebuilt the temple. And it was a humble building compared to Solomon's.

It is a very gripping. It's very poignant place there in the book of Ezra, where it describes the dedication of the temple that Ezra built with the returning captives. And it says that the young men rejoice.

They were so excited that here was the temple and we've got a temple and we never saw a temple in our whole life. And here's one in Jerusalem. But it says that the old men wept because they remembered how great the former temple had been.

And so Ezra rebuilt the temple, but they didn't have much money. This wasn't built with gold. It was built with plastic or whatever the ancient equivalent of it was.

You know, they did the best they could. God was honored by it, but it wasn't Solomon's temple. And this ached in their heart.

But then came King Herod and Herod was an ambitious man, not a Jew, an Edomite, a descendant of the Edomites. And Herod had on his heart to build a building more glorious than Solomon. And you might say that he even succeeded.

And this temple, as it was in the days of Jesus, which is commonly called the Second Temple or Herod's Temple, was actually a renovated Ezra's temple. It was the same basic building as Ezra's, but man, did he renovate it? Did he add on to it? He made it glorious. And that was the temple that existed in the days of Jesus.

And it was very much an idol in the minds of the people of Israel. But here at the end of verse 38, you have this glorious finishing of the temple. You can just almost see it in your mind.

They're up on the temple mount. They're beautiful, glistening with the marble and the gold and the beautiful courtyards and the priestly offerings and all the rest of it. But it wasn't just about building the temple.

There were also other things that needed to be built, and that's concerning here at chapter 7, verse 1. But Solomon took 13 years to build his own house, so he finished all his house. Whoa. Do you catch a little bit of a disconnect here? A little bit of a problem between chapter 6, verse 38 and chapter 7, verse 1. How many years did it take to build the temple? It took 7 years.

How many years did it take to build Solomon's house? 13 years. Now, the temple was glorious, but the idea that we seem to have from verse 1 of chapter 7 is that Solomon wanted a house that was more glorious than the temple. You can say that Solomon finished the work of building the temple, but he wanted something even more glorious than that in his own house.

And isn't it interesting? We're going to come up to chapter 11 in several weeks, and we'll find the very painful description of Solomon's last years. But don't you see little sprinkles of warnings throughout the life of Solomon? This is one of them. Verse 2. He also built the house of the forest of Lebanon.

Its length was 100 cubits, its width 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits, with four rows of cedar pillars and the cedar beams on the pillars. It was paneled with cedar above the beams that were on the 45 pillars, 13 to a row. There were windows with beveled frames in the three rows, and the window was opposite in three tiers.

It goes on and on and on all the way through here. Verse 12, describing this great palace that he made for himself and the different rooms or the different buildings of the palace complex, the house of the forest of Lebanon, the hall of pillars, the hall of judgment, all these different places. It's interesting that they called it the house of the forest of Lebanon.

So much magnificent cedar wood from Lebanon was used to build Solomon's palace that they called it the house of the forest of Lebanon. You walked into that room and it was like walking in the forest of Lebanon. That's all you saw was beautiful cedar everywhere.

And they had 45 pillars, which would give you the idea of these great, great trees all around you. By the way, first Kings chapter 10 tells us that 500 golden shields were hung in the house of the forest of Lebanon. Isaiah chapter 22 calls this this house an armory, a place where you stole arm.

I mean, this sort of this was a spectacular building. And so were the inner court of the house of the Lord. It was an amazing, amazing place.

It was to use the idea here. Well, let's just read verse 12. The great court was enclosed with three rows of hewn stones and a row of cedar beams.

So were the inner court of the house of the Lord and the vessel of the temple. To get the idea there, it's saying Solomon built his house. Oh, yeah.

And they did some of those same things in the temple. The idea you're left with over and over again was that Solomon was more concerned with building his house and making his house glorious than he was with even making the temple of God glorious. It's interesting, sort of backwards from his father, David, wasn't it? David built himself a house and then he said, oh, God should have a house.

Let's make a temple. Solomon said, all right, we'll get the temple out of the way. Then I'm building my house.

Quite a contrast, isn't it? You know, when you travel around today, go all over Europe today and you'll find magnificent cathedrals. Do you like walking into those places? I do. We love to walk inside these old cathedrals and see the artwork and see the construction and see the amazing.

I'm absolutely amazed at the technology and the construction that they used to build these wonderful, wonderful old buildings. It took incredible labor and cost to people who would never dream of living in such a spectacular place. The idea that somebody would live in a building that spectacular was completely foreign to people back then.

You see what they said in old Europe then was our most magnificent buildings will be churches. That said something about their priorities. It said something about their heart.

What does it say about Solomon's heart? That his own home, that his own house, his own home was a more spectacular building than the temple of the Lord. You can't tell me that it says nothing about his priorities, that it says nothing about the attitude of his heart. But then even more, you have to say, what does it say about us today? What are our cathedrals? What are the greatest buildings that we make in our culture today? Greatest buildings, amusement parks, shopping malls, sports stadiums.

Are these not the great buildings we make today? How much more wonderful it would be if people had a concern to make really amazing, glorious churches. I don't think I would want to go back to the days of cathedrals. If you walk into those places, and the one thing I hate about those old cathedrals is you walk in there and almost every one of them, almost without fail, you realize these are horrible places for preaching the word of God.

The acoustics do not lend themselves to good preaching, to good speaking. Maybe beautiful music, maybe beautiful artistic demonstration. So I'm not saying we get back to building cathedrals, but make no mistake about it.

The priorities of our modern culture are demonstrated by what we make our most glorious buildings about. And so were Solomon's priorities. Well, verse 13 begins the section describing some of the temple furnishings here.

Now King Solomon sent and brought Hiram from Tyre. He was the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali. His father was a man of Tyre, a bronze worker.

He was filled with wisdom and understanding and skill in working with all kinds of bronze work. So he came to King Solomon and did all his work. Now this man was half Israeli and half Gentile.

Isn't it interesting? It didn't matter to Solomon. He said, no, no, no, no. We can only have pure Israelite blood building the temple.

He said, no, no, no. You're the best man for the job. You come in and do the job.

And that's how it was done in the building of what Solomon wanted to build. Verse 15, here are the different articles that were made for the furnishings of the temple. Now, matter of fact, this section here goes all the way from verse 15, all the way to the end of the chapter, verse 51, where it talks about the different articles that were made for the house of the Lord.

For example, you can see here in verse 15 and he cast two pillars of bronze, each one, 18 cubits high and a line of 12 cubits measured the circumference of each. Then he made two capitals of cast bronze to be set on the tops of the pillars. The height of one capital was five cubits and the height of the other capital was five cubits.

He made a lattice network with reeds of chain work for the capitals, which were on top of the pillars, seven chains for one capital and seven for the other capitals. Well, these very impressive pillars were actually so noteworthy, two great pillars in the temple that they were given names. Second Chronicles, chapter three, verse 17 mentioned the names of these pillars, that they were called Yachin and Boaz.

They were given names. Isn't that interesting? Yachin, the name means he shall establish. Boaz, the name of the other one, means in strength.

I think that's significant. You walked into the temple, the first things you saw were Yachin and Boaz, and those were meant to remind them of something. The pillars were to be a constant reminder that he was to the king, that he ruled by God's appointment, by God's grace and by God's strength.

I think they were also meant to remind Israel of the two pillars that guided them through the wilderness. You know, there was a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day that led Israel through the

wilderness. But I think that more importantly than maybe the pillars themselves were the names they were given.

You would walk up to the temple and say, look, there is he shall establish. And over there is in him is strength. Every time a person walked up to the temple, it put them in the right frame of mind to worship.

When crowds gathered at the temple for the morning and evening sacrifice to worship the Lord, the Levites led the people, standing in front of those two pillars. And the two pillars were he shall establish and in him is strength. You could almost say that of the temple of God itself, that it was Yachin and Boaz, that it was established by God and that it was built by the strength of God.

Of course, every time God met his people, that's what he wanted to give to them. He wanted to establish them in him and he wanted them to give them strength. I think that is a glorious thing.

Every time a church building is built, it would be great if you had two pillars in front of this building here, Yachin and Boaz. One that said he shall establish and the other one that says in human strength, it would say come to this place and get established, come to this place and receive the strength of God. It's a beautiful idea here.

So those were the great pillars. There was another thing that he made there. If you look at verse twenty three, it talks about the sea of bronze, it says, and he made the sea of cast bronze, 10 cubits from one brim to the other.

It was completely round. Its height was five cubits and a line of 30 cubits measured in its circumference. This was a huge basin of water used for the ceremonial washings associated with sacrifice.

It was used by the priest for cleansing their hands and feet and then also for rinsing off the offerings. It held something like eleven thousand five hundred gallons or you could say forty three thousand five hundred liters. It was extremely big.

It was connected with the ceremonial washings again of the temple. And so it was a magnificent thing right there in the middle of the temple area. And then on verse forty eight, it describes something else that they made.

It says that Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of the Lord, the altar of gold and the table of gold on which was the showbread. Now, if you remember, inside of the tabernacle were different pieces of furniture. It wasn't just an empty room.

You would walk into the tabernacle and on the left you would see a menorah, a golden lampstand that would light the tabernacle because there was no natural source of light inside the tabernacle. By the way, it may very well be that there were natural sources of light coming into the temple. I can't say that with certainty, but some of the architectural reconstructions I have seen indicate that there may have been natural light coming into the temple.

But that's impossible to know for certainty one way or another. But if you walked into the tabernacle, you'd see the menorah or the lampstand on this side. On your right side, you would see the table of showbread.

This was a golden table upon which were you could call them loaves. They were actually more like pieces of flatbread because that what they would eat back then. But they were pieces or loaves of bread stacked

upon a table that indicated the fellowship that God wanted to have with Israel.

There were 12 loaves, one representing each tribe of Israel, and they had to be changed regularly because God wanted the fellowship with his people to be fresh. He didn't want it to be stale. And then right in front of you would be the altar of incense.

The altar of incense was that place upon which burning coals were brought and then incense was sprinkled and it filled the whole tabernacle with the smell of incense. Now when Solomon built the temple, he remade these important pieces of furniture and he had this great craftsman remake them. And so he rebuilt the table of showbread.

As a matter of fact, 2 Chronicles chapter 4 verse 8 tells us that they made 10 tables of showbread, not just one. Here they're collectively described as one, but 2 Chronicles makes it clear that there were actually 10 different tables of showbread. I don't know why 10.

It seemed to me that you make 12, you know, if it's connected with the tribes of Israel. I don't know why, but for some reason Solomon made 10. And then all the great works of art and all the gold pieces and all the furnishings and all the beautiful things it says here in verse 51.

So all the work that King Solomon had done for the house of the Lord was finished and Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated, the silver and the gold and the furnishings. He put them in the treasuries of the house of the Lord. So all these great works of art and articles of great value were placed in the temple.

This included the carts that they made, which are described there in chapter 7, the shovels, the bowls, and all the other needed utensils for sacrifice. And he brought in all the things that David had prepared. And so the work of the temple was finished.

Now our next time together, we're going to begin in chapter 8 and we're going to look at this magnificent time when Solomon dedicated the temple. But it's worth it for us to consider, again, the similarity between the way God wanted the temple built and the way that he works in your life. God spares no expense, no trouble, no costly thing does he spare in building in your life.

He wants to make you as an individual a beautiful temple and so he works in your life that way. He's chipping away, isn't he? He's using the finest materials. He's fashioning according to the most skillful craftsmen and, might I say, he's working according to a plan.

Do you feel sometimes that God's work in your life is almost, you know, haphazard, that he's making it up as it goes along? It's just moved from one thing to another. Don't think that. He's working according to a plan just as much as Solomon had a plan.

And it was a plan prepared a long time in advance. God is working that in your individual life. But secondly, he's also doing it in the church.

I have to say, sometimes I look at the body of Christ as a whole. Of course, we're very encouraged by what we see God doing around us and in our immediate midst. It's wonderful to see and we're excited about.

You take a look at the body of Christ as a whole and you wonder if they were to transfer the condition of the body of Christ as a whole, let's say in Europe or in Germany and take it. And if you were to transform it into the figure of a building, what would it look like? Would it look like a ruin? You know, would it look like a glorious thing like Solomon's temple? But you realize that God is building something precious out of that as well. There are times when it's more evident that it's doing that, but he's doing a glorious work of building nevertheless.

He's shaping you right here so that you'll fit in properly up there in the temple. Don't despise that work. You are a dwelling place of the Spirit of God just as much, or might I say, maybe even more so than that temple that Solomon built.

This should give us great encouragement and say, Lord, keep doing your building work in me. I know you have a plan. I know you're using the right materials.

I know you bring the best people along to do the work. Do your building work in me. Well, let's pray and then we can conclude this evening by taking any questions that you might have.

Father, thank you for this building work that you do in our life. It's not always easy. Often, Lord, we cry out before you, and we feel the hurt when the chisel and the hammer work in us.

Sometimes, Lord, we just wish that we would just naturally become these shaped stones. Lord, we know it just doesn't work that way. We know that your work of shaping just works in us.

Hammer and chisel along the way. But, Father, we're grateful for it. And we pray, Lord, that you would continue and that we would not resist your plan in any way.

Rather, you would make us workers along with your plan to see this great work of building that you do in our lives individually and in your church as a whole. We thank you for it and we praise you for it tonight, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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