

# OpenTheo

## 1 Kings 5 - 6



### 1 Kings - Steve Gregg

In "1 Kings 5-6," Steve Gregg discusses the building of Solomon's temple, which took seven years to complete. Solomon received help from King Hiram, who ruled over the region of Lebanon and provided him with trees for the project. The temple was significantly larger than the tabernacle and had several rooms that were likely used for different purposes. The innermost room, the Holy Holies, was covered with pure gold and had solid gold cherubim and palm trees.

## Transcript

We're now turning to 1 Kings 5. And in the first chapters, well, I should say in the last two chapters we looked at, chapters 3 and 4, we saw Solomon received a special gift in the era of wisdom. And then we saw an example of that wisdom in action in a courtroom case where he made the judgment between the two women who had a dispute over the same baby. And then we read details of his administration, who his officers were, how prosperous he was, how much food was collected on a regular basis to feed his household, the extent of his reign, and so forth.

And at the end of the chapter we read about how wise he was, wiser than many other people who are apparently esteemed as being among the wisest, or else it would be no sense to mention them. He was wiser than all men, wiser than Ethan the Ezraite, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahal. And his fame was in all the surrounding nations.

So he became famous for being so wise. And it says in verse 34, all men of all nations from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom came to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Later we will read about a particular case of a queen, the queen of Sheba, who came particularly to hear his wisdom.

But before that, we'll have a focus on the primary thing for which Solomon, the primary accomplishment for which Solomon is remembered. And that is, of course, the building of the temple. He built some other buildings too.

His own palace and some other projects in and around Jerusalem. But the temple, of

course, is the most significant long-term and the most significant spiritually, because it became the center of worship for Israel, which had not really been centralized so much in the previous few centuries. During the period of the judges, and apparently during the time of Saul's reign and even David's reign, worship was not centralized as it had been in the time of Moses.

And it was supposed to be. In the time of Moses, of course, God had elected himself to build a house or have built a house for him to inhabit so that his presence could be among his people. And his glory was seen to reside there.

And that was the place that people were required to come if they would offer sacrifices. And by the way, offering sacrifices was the core element of worship. So, worshiping God at his tabernacle was what was expected in the time of Moses.

Now, I'm not saying there was no tabernacle worship in the years in between Moses and Solomon, but it seems that the tabernacle moved around a bit. At one time it was at Shiloh. At another time it was at Nob.

At this point in time, it would appear it was in Gibeon, what was left of the tabernacle. And some of its furniture was there. But the ark, of course, was in Jerusalem where David had brought it.

And that's a strange separation to have the ark separated from the tabernacle. And we're never really told why it was kept separate. It seems since David brought the ark to Jerusalem, it would have made sense for him also to bring the tabernacle to Jerusalem.

And why they did not, I don't know. It's possible that the tabernacle with all of its activity might have taken up too much of the space in that small walled city of Jerusalem for David's liking. Solomon apparently expanded the borders of Jerusalem so that it would include and be able to center around the worship service.

But, of course, the tabernacle, when it was functioning, would have been a place very clogged and crowded with a lot of priests, a lot of Levites, a lot of worshipers, a lot of animals, a lot of blood. Obviously, it would dominate several blocks of any neighborhood. And perhaps in David's day, Jerusalem was small enough that he felt like there really wasn't room for all that activity.

It would more or less interfere with the other important things he was doing in establishing his capital there. But Solomon now is going to set up the house for God the first time a permanent structure was set up. This was not God's idea apparently, but it was David's idea.

And God accommodated David and apparently had revealed to David plans for this building just as he had revealed plans to Moses for the tabernacle. And so Solomon, now having been established in his reign, is going to fulfill this commission that God has

given him. Because God had told David that though David would not be permitted to build the temple, Solomon, his son, would do so.

And so we see Solomon taking that commission seriously and making preparations to do so in chapter 5. And chapter 6 will contain the actual activity of building the temple itself. 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.

Then Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, You know how my father David could not build a house for the name of Yahweh, his 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 Yahweh my God has given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrence. And behold, I propose to build a house for the name of the Lord my God.

As Yahweh spoke to my father David, saying, Your son, whom I will set on your throne, in your place he shall build 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 there is none among us who has the skill to cut timber like the Sidonians.

So it was, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly and said, Blessed be Yahweh this day, for he has given David a wise son over this great people. Then Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the message which you sent to me, and I will do all that you desire concerning the cedar and cypress logs. My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon to the sea.

I will float them in rafts by sea to this place that you indicate to me, and will have them broken apart there, and you can take them away, and you shall fulfill my desire by giving food for my household. Now Solomon of course already is on good terms with this man. It's interesting because the man was from Tyre.

He was part of the Lebanese, what we call Lebanon today, and it was called Lebanon back then, region. He's a Gentile, a Phoenician they would have been called back then. But Phoenicia was pretty much the same as what we would call Lebanon, and the forests in Lebanon were cedar forests, and it was considered to be much superior wood to the cypress wood that grew plentifully in Israel.

Israel had its trees, but the cypress trees were considered inferior as building materials to the cedar, and Lebanon had its forests of cedar. Now when you think of the Middle East today, you think mainly of kind of desert area. You don't think of it as lush forests of cedar or sycamore or any other kind of tree, although of course the modern people of Israel have replanted and recultivated the land.

Yet if you're like me, you think of the area largely as desert region, and it was for a very

long time. But at one time, in very ancient times, it was a land flowing with milk and honey. It was very lush and green.

Remember in the days of Abraham, the area where Sodom and Gomorrah were, in the southern Dead Sea region, was said to be as lush as the Garden of Eden. Now that's hard to imagine today because that's one of the driest, most barren places on the earth today. It's very desert-like, very hot, very not tropical at all.

But at one time, apparently Israel and the whole region was full of jungle. In fact, the Bible makes reference in the Old Testament to the jungle of the Jordan. That's where lions were.

There are no lions in Israel today, but apparently through much of the Old Testament times, there were lions in Israel, and they lived in the jungle around the Jordan. Well, there's not much jungle around the Jordan today. It's mostly desert in that area.

It has been cultivated, and it's green, and they're growing crops and things, and trees have been brought in. But it's amazing how much the land was changed by the removal of trees. And we do know that on the occasions when the Babylonians, and then later the Romans, came and besieged Jerusalem, they often would just cut down all the trees in the region in order to build siege works and things to get over the walls or through the walls, battering rams and so forth.

They would cut down the trees in the area. Josephus, for example, says that when the Romans were besieging Jerusalem, that they cut down all the trees in the region. He said what had looked like beautiful gardens previously was now just barren and treeless and without plants.

And so apparently it was through these judgments that came upon Israel that the place which was so lush and fruitful in time became barren. But in the days of Solomon, there were a lot of trees in the region, and a lot of them were in Lebanon, and the king of Tyre, Hiram, was the one who ruled that region. And because they had those kinds of trees and did a lot of projects with them, the people of Sidon, which is the same region, Tyre and Sidon were the main cities of Phoenicia, the people of Sidon were experts at wood carving, wood cutting, and so forth.

And so Solomon felt for a project as important as that which he was seeking to do, he wanted to have the very best. So instead of having Israelites do that part of the labor, he wanted the most skilled people to do so. Now this is in contrast to when Moses built the tabernacle, because the man who designed and built the tabernacle and its furniture Bezalel, was said to be given the spirit of God.

God gave him the spirit and the wisdom to know how to do all this kind of work that had to be done, whether it was sewing and leather work, or whether it was carpentry and

cabinet making type work, or gold and so forth, or jewel setting work. There are all kinds of things that had to be done with reference to the tabernacle and making the priest's garments and such. And God selected a man, a Jewish man, and put his spirit in him so that the work would be done by a spirit-filled man.

The work would be done, in other words, through the power of God, not by might, nor by power, nor by human talent, but by God's spirit. And yet Solomon does things differently. He doesn't even pick Jewish people to do some of this work.

Many picks people of another country just because naturally they are more talented. Now, whether this was wrong of him to do or not, we cannot say. There are many things about the temple, as Solomon built it, that were very different than the tabernacle.

And yet we are told that he had plans that David had given him, which God had given to David. That being so, we have to assume that some of the innovations may have been actually in the directions, and why God would have Phoenicians instead of Jews build the temple is not anything I can really answer, except for the fact that in the prophets who wrote about the coming of the Messianic age, sometimes there is reference to the fact that Gentiles shall come and build the house of the Lord. Now, the house of the Lord today is what? The church, the body of Christ.

We are living stones built into a spiritual house. We are the habitation of God on the earth. The temple of God is the church of God.

Not the church buildings, but church people. We are the body of Christ and we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. And the building up of the church is done not only by Jews, but also by Gentiles.

In fact, maybe primarily by Gentiles. The original foundation was laid by Jewish people. The apostles who went and preached the gospel and they laid the foundation of the church.

Much of the work that has been built on top of that foundation has been done by Gentiles who have come into the kingdom with the Jews. Those sheep that Jesus had that his disciples didn't know about, who he would go and bring in and they would become one flock with one shepherd. So, the church is itself built up through the gifted hands of persons, Jews and Gentiles.

Primarily Gentiles, frankly, historically. And that being so, it may have been God's instruction that the Gentiles, in this case, be used to have a role in building the temple. We will find there are other things in the building of Solomon's temple that have a correlation to the spiritual building of the church.

And no doubt this was intentional. And so, it's possible that God actually wanted Gentiles involved this time. Because the building project was going to be a type and a shadow of

God's ultimate temple, which is his body and is not simply a Jewish project.

So, Solomon asks these skilled Sidonians to do the cutting and so forth. And he says, I'll pay you whatever you want to charge me for this. I don't have any lack of money.

And so, Hiram writes back and is very happy to cooperate. What's interesting is how Solomon speaks very boldly to this pagan about Yahweh. He is very uninhibited about speaking about Yahweh.

In fact, he actually, as he speaks to Hiram elsewhere, he mentions how Yahweh is the greatest of all gods and so forth. Which Hiram, of course, served other gods. Hiram was a pagan.

He would acknowledge that Yahweh was a real god because everybody believed that the gods of other nations were real gods. They just didn't believe they were unique gods. They believed that they were national gods.

That each nation had its own god. And even the pagans recognized that Yahweh was Israel's god and had probably very little doubt that he was a real god. Because they believed every nation had a real god.

This is called henotheism. It's a form of polytheism, but it's special. In that, although they believed there were many gods, they really believed that essentially there was a god.

Primarily involved in each nation. And it's possible that there was some... Sometimes people talk about territorial spirits and demons that are over certain countries. It may well be that there could be some basis for that.

And the idea that Chemosh was the territorial demon over the Moabites and Baal over the Phoenicians and Moloch over the Canaanites and so forth. It's possible that they were not really out of touch. That there really were spiritual entities ruling over each of these nations.

I wouldn't say for sure, but we do know in Daniel chapter 10, a messenger from God is talking to Daniel about the principality that's over Persia and the principality that's over Grecia and so forth. And almost all Bible scholars agree that this is a reference to demonic powers. But maybe those demonic powers are the gods of those nations.

Because in Deuteronomy, Moses says, and in 1 Corinthians 10, Paul says, both of them say, that the things that the pagans worship are demons. For example, 1 Corinthians 10.20, I think it is, Paul says the things that the heathen offer, they offer to demons and not to God. So Hiram would have been a worshipper of another god, so to speak, a demon.

And the nations would look upon Yahweh as the God of Israel. Now Solomon made no

bones about the fact that Yahweh is the greatest God. He is the God that made everything.

He is not just the God of Israel, He is the God of the whole universe because He made the whole universe. Now Solomon doesn't go into that here. But it's underlining and he's not ashamed to make reference to Yahweh in talking to this pagan.

He's not making any apologies for his loyalty to Yahweh and his desire to build a house for Yahweh. And what's amazing is that Hiram speaks well of Yahweh and of the project that Solomon is proposing. Because in verse 8 he said, I have considered the message and I will do all you desire about the laws.

It's in verse 7 that Hiram says, Blessed is Yahweh this day, for He has given David a wise son over this great people. It would be nice if the Arabs around Israel would speak this way about Israel and about Yahweh today. Talk about Israel as a great people which God has made them and of Yahweh as a great God.

The spiritual demographics in the region have changed since the days of Solomon. You don't have the Arab peoples around speaking so well about Israel and about their God. So he says he's going to send the logs down by sea.

Apparently they're going to bind the logs together into rafts, float them down, and when they get down to, as it turned out they came down to Joppa which was Jerusalem's seaport. Jerusalem was not on the coast. Jerusalem was inland.

But when they wanted to go to sea they went down to Joppa. And of course that's where Jonah set sail from when he was trying to get away from God, Joppa. It's also where Peter was when he saw the vision of the animals lowered in a great sheet and when he was being sent to Caesarea to talk to Cornelius.

Peter was in Joppa. But Joppa was a seaport and that's where they would float the logs down to in the form of rafts. And then as they would get down to where they were going, he says they'd break them apart, he says in verse 9. He says in the middle of verse 9, I will have them broken apart there.

That doesn't mean he's going to break individual logs necessarily, although they would no doubt split the logs in the course of preparing them into boards. But here he seems to be talking about when they float them down they'll be grouped together as rafts and then they'll break them apart into individual logs. Then Solomon will be responsible for transporting them over land to Jerusalem.

And so there's this agreement made and at the end Hiram says in verse 9, and you shall fulfill my desire by giving food for my household. In other words, this is what you'll pay me. You can pay me in food.

And this makes sense because Lebanon had a lot of wood, but they didn't have a lot of good land for farming. Israel didn't have a lot of good wood, but they had a lot of good farmland and they produced a lot as they do today. And of course they do today because they have irrigation.

In those days they had two rainy seasons and they were able to grow a lot of crops unless they were under God's curse, in which case famines often came to them. But here because Israel could grow more crops than Lebanon could, and Lebanon grew more trees than Israel could, there's sort of a trade-off of those two different commodities. They scratch in each other's backs.

Verse 10, So 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 this was not a single payment, this was an annual payment. And the reason it would be annual is because that's when you collect the grain and the oil. You get the oil from the olive harvest and the grain from the regular harvest.

So the harvest is once a year. So once they'd haul in their harvest, they would take this portion and send it on up to become the supply for Hiram in exchange for the work that his people did. And his people worked on that temple for seven years.

So for seven years, Hiram received a lot of food from the Israeli soil. 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. 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 month in Lebanon and two months at home. Now these were Jewish workers or Israelite workers, 30,000 of them.

They were really the smallest part of the workforce. And the forced laborers were taken from among the non-Jewish population. Hittites and Canaanites that were still in the land of Israel were pressed into service into forced labor.

These were the people who really their ancestors should have been exterminated by Joshua and had not been. But since these people were still around in apparently significant numbers, Solomon turned them into slave laborers for this project. Now these Jewish workers, these Israelite workers, there were 30,000 of them, and they worked in three different shifts.

10,000 at a time. They were sent up to Lebanon to help Hiram's men cut the trees and prepare them and ship them down. They only needed a labor force of 10,000 at a time, but he didn't want people to be away from home all the time, perhaps in all likelihood



because he wanted to maintain their family life.

But he did find it was at least acceptable from his point of view to have them away from home about a third of the time. They'd be home two-thirds of the year and gone one-third of the year. I believe, I won't mention who it is, but the leader of a Christian organization I know who travels extensively and teaches all over the world, he was trying to decide when he was a younger man how much time he should devote to travel and ministry and how much to staying at home with his family.

And I believe this verse or this example informed his decision that he'd be with his family two-thirds of the time and travel a third of the time. And he felt like if Solomon, who was at this point wise and godly, judged that that was okay for families, that it would be okay for his. Actually, what I think he ended up doing was a third of the time he traveled without his family and a third of the time he traveled with his family and a third of the year he was home with his family.

So he was with his family two-thirds of the time. One of those thirds he was on the road with them the other time they were at home. So, anyway, I don't know that that's the right thing to do or the wrong thing to do, but I found it interesting that someone would find this passage to have something in it that would be relevant to making decisions about, you know, involvement in ministry and family and so forth.

I personally would not find it easy to be away from my family a third of the time. I had a hard time being away from my family even a week at a time. But that's, I'm a wimp.

These guys had to tough it out and go and work and they couldn't even send emails or Skype. I can't imagine a time when people didn't have, you know, the kind of communication we had. They just had to be away.

So that's how he organized his Jewish labor force. And then there were the non-Jews. Verse 15, Solomon had 70,000 who carried burdens, 80,000 who quarried stone in the mountains.

Oh, I didn't mention, I should have at the end of verse 14. It says, Adonairim was in charge of the labor force. He was the general supervisor.

He actually fell on hard luck when Rehoboam became king because he tried to continue to enforce the policies at a time when the people of Israel had decided to rebel and he got himself killed by trying to enforce the same labor policies and taxation policies for Rehoboam that he had been involved with for Solomon and he got killed. The population was not agreeable with him. But at this point, he apparently served well the nation and organized lots and lots of people.

70,000 burden bearers and 80,000 quarriers, stone cutters in the quarries. Besides, 3,300 from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies. I believe in Chronicles, the number there is

given as 3,600.

But here, it says 3,300 from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies who supervised 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 Gabalites quarried them.

The Gabalites are people who actually lived in a city further north than Tyre. And maybe I should have mentioned since you might not be familiar, Tyre where Hiram ruled was north of Israel. Phoenicia was just the northern neighbor of Israel and Tyre, the king of Tyre was ruling there.

And the Gabalites were in that area and just a little further north than Tyre. And they quarried the stones and they prepared timber and stones to build the temple. And it came to pass in the 480th 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 of Ziv, which is the second month of the year, that he began to build the house of the Lord.

Now this verse has chronological information that has been very serviceable to those trying to set dates for various things. It becomes sort of an anchor point for some important events. It tells us something about the relation of the building of the temple to the Exodus itself.

And from that you can calculate backward the time of the reign of Solomon, the time of the reign of David and so forth and of Saul because each of them reigned for 40 years. And so the dates of the period of the judges and things like that can be calculated in some measure from this particular information. But as you can see, this is just about almost 500 years after the Exodus, 480 years.

And therefore we could say that from the building of the tabernacle to the building of the temple was very close to 500 years, about half a millennium between the building of the tabernacle and that of the temple. Which means, of course, that the tabernacle, which was built of considerably more perishable materials, must have been maintained by replacing curtains and replacing coverings and replacing veils and so forth as necessary because cloth and leather items don't usually hold up well for hundreds of years. So probably the boards of the tabernacle were still intact because they were wood and they were overlaid with gold.

They might have occasionally had to be replaced if they were damaged, but the coverings and the veils and the curtains and so forth probably had to be replaced periodically. But now that 500 years or 480 years has now passed and we're going to do away with the tabernacle and have something permanent in its place. Now the house which King Solomon built for the Lord, its length was 60 cubits, its width 20, and its height 30 cubits.

Now you may recall, if you've studied the Pentateuch with us, that a cubit was about 18 inches. Originally a cubit measure was an inexact amount. It represented the distance of the forearm from the elbow to the longest finger, basically the middle finger's tip.

So if you would put out your arm like this to measure, and that's probably what they did, they would measure from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger and that would be one cubit. Eventually that was standardized and to a length that was just about 18 inches. So we can consider about a foot and a half per cubit and therefore since its length was 60 cubits, that's 90 feet long, the building.

Its width was 20 cubits, which would be 30 feet wide, and its height was 30 cubits, that would be 45 feet tall, much taller than wide and half as tall as long. Now these dimensions, at least the footprint of the building, was exactly double the size of the tabernacle. The tabernacle had been 15 feet wide and 45 feet deep or long.

It had not been as tall proportionately. The tabernacle was a tent, not a building, and it was only as tall as it was wide. So it was 15 feet tall, 15 feet wide, and 45 feet deep, where this building has a floor plan twice the size of the tabernacle but much taller.

Now even at that, it's a rather small building. When you consider the temples of the ancient times, the pagan temples often are huge. They're gigantic, ornate buildings.

Now Solomon's building was ornate and had a ton of gold in it, not literally a ton, but probably not far from it. I forget the amount, but lots of gold. It was a very fancy building, but a very small one by comparison to pagan temples, and even very small by comparison to a modern church.

A building that's only 30 feet wide and 90 feet deep would be an extremely small church by American standards. That'd be for a very small congregation. But you see the difference was that a church is built to house people.

The temple was not a place for congregational meetings. We sometimes think of the temple as a sort of analogous to our church, but it isn't. In later years, the synagogues were analogous to our churches.

A synagogue existed in every town where there were 10 or more Jewish families. And therefore there were synagogues all over the Roman Empire in the days of Paul and in the days of Jesus. But the temple, there was only one, and it was not used for congregational worship except in the outer court.

People would gather in the outer court on festival days and so forth, but its daily use was not for services such as we think of a church service. That's what the synagogues were for. The temple was used for the offering of sacrifices.

It was only needed that the priests would have enough room to kill animals and

manipulate their corpses and their blood and so forth and do the rituals that were necessary. So it took a relatively small building. There was not need for a lot more room than that.

Also the fact that this had to be housed in Jerusalem meant that there were limits on space. But now the outer court, we are not given any dimensions of it. We do know the dimensions of the tabernacle's outer court, but we are not given the dimensions of the temple's outer court.

The perimeter around the whole temple complex was, it may have been much, much, much larger than that of the tabernacle's outer court. The building itself is only twice the size. Now the vestibule in front of the sanctuary of the house was 20 cubits long across the breadth of the house and its width extended 10 cubits from the front of the house.

Now we're talking about the porch, the portico. At the entrance of the temple, it was just probably a covered patio or covered porch. And it was as wide as the temple.

It was the width of it, 20 cubits. So if you're looking at the front entrance, the building is 20 cubits wide and so is the portico, the porch. And yet it extended 10 cubits or 15 feet out from the front of the building out toward the courtyard.

So there was a 15 by 30 foot covered porch in front. This probably would allow, in times of rain and things like that, the priests to dry off or take their shoes off before they go walking into the temple itself. Anyway, we're not told really what it was for.

Now later on, Herod had embellished Zerubbabel's temple. It was never quite the same as Solomon's temple. But in the days of Jesus, Herod's temple had quite a few different porticos like this.

And the early Christians and Jesus himself taught in these open porticos, these open porches. In fact, there is one in Solomon's temple which is called the portico or the porch or the vestibule of Solomon, named after him. Although he had not built that temple, he had built the earlier one.

Anyway, these covered areas became meeting places where rabbis in the time of Jesus would sit and teach groups of people. And Jesus sat in such a place and taught in the temple on a regular basis whenever he was in Jerusalem. And verse four says, 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 both the sanctuary and the inner sanctuary, thus he made side chambers all around it. Now, the overall scheme of the temple was similar to the tabernacle in that there was a larger and a smaller compartment.

The larger compartment would be the area you walk into initially. It's the main, what

they call the sanctuary, the holy place. Then the smaller section was further in, past a set of doors, in this case, and a veil.

And that was the holy of holies. And that was the place where the ark was housed and the place where on the day of atonement the priest would go in, just as in the case of the tabernacle. But apart from those general similarities, that is that there was a holy place and a holy of holies, the temple was considerably different than the tabernacle in that it had lots of rooms which were no doubt used for various purposes.

Probably sleeping rooms for the Levites or the priests that were on duty during a given week. It may be that some of them came from some distance because they lived in Levitical cities all over Israel. And when they were on duty, they may have had to have sleeping rooms there at the temple.

I'm only guessing. But they also had storage rooms there because when people would bring their tithes of grain, they became the year's supply of food for the Levites and they had to store it somewhere. So they had storage rooms.

But the sanctuary, therefore, was surrounded by these rooms. Actually, they were three stories high, so there were a lot of rooms, a lot of storage space there. And apparently at the top above the rooms, there were these narrow beveled windows.

They were just for light. They were narrow so they didn't let a lot of weather in, but they did let light in. And the window frames were beveled so that they probably kind of opened inward and were a little narrower on the outside than on the inside, or else it was the other way around.

But that's what we're describing. They were high. They were above these rooms on the outer edges under the roof, probably under the eaves of the temple if it had eaves, where eaves would normally be expected to be.

Now it says 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.

So as you go three stories up, each story is a little, the rooms are a little wider, a cubit wider than the one under it. Now how does that work out? Well, the stones of the outer wall were of different depths or widths, or however you want to look at it, at different levels. The stones actually of the outer wall would get smaller as you went toward the top, which gave more space within the rooms.

And so the rooms actually were slightly larger as you went upward. I'm not sure if there's any symbolism in that. There probably is, but I'm not sure exactly that I would be confident in identifying what that would symbolize.

So it says that for he made narrow ledges around the outside of the temple so that the

support beams could not be fastened, could not be fastened to the walls of the temple. So instead of fastening the support beams for the roof to the walls with any kind of fastener, instead there were ledges. Because of the way the walls were, what we say, stepped or whatever, there was a ledge that they could lay the beams on, and apparently they didn't fasten them.

They just laid them there and let the gravity hold them in place. 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. This verse means a lot to me because when I was just a teenager and beginning in the ministry, for the most part, I just repeated everything I'd heard from my teachers.

I didn't know much, and I only knew what I'd heard. And so as a teacher, I pretty much parroted my teachers. I don't remember having very much original insight or original things to say.

And what was my first original insight doesn't seem very profound to me now, 42 years later, but I remember how it was at the time. The first time I really got what seemed like a revelation about something in the Bible, my own kind of revelation that was like my own insight I'd never heard anyone say before. That seemed profound at the time, and it was about this verse.

Because one night I was asked to give a teaching at a Christian coffeehouse, and just in the few, probably in the hour before I was to teach, I was reading and praying, and I felt like God gave me a message about the church being the temple of the Holy Spirit, and we are living stones, and so forth. And I was reading this verse, and I'm sure that many of you probably have had the same thought because it's not really, like I said, not that deep. I was just a kid.

It was deep for me at the time. But I realized that this was a picture of how God is building the church. He's hewing or smoothing the stones at the quarry, not at the temple site.

We will be assembled when Jesus calls us up and we meet the Lord, and the air will be assembled into one building. Right now we are in the quarry, and we are being shaped. The stones of Solomon's temple, they say, were not only huge, but they were perfectly smooth, and it would have taken an incredible amount of work to smooth these stones of the quarry because they don't come out of the mountain that way.

They come out of the mountain all kinds of shapes, but they had to make them perfectly rectangular, and not just perfectly rectangular in general, but their sides were so smooth that it is said they didn't need to use any mortar between the stones. It was not possible for even a wisp of air or draft to come through the walls even though there was no mortar because the stones were so smooth they perfectly fit with one another. That's a

high degree of perfection.

The stones aren't found in that condition, but they are made to be in that condition. A great deal of work had to be done on them. They had to be chiseled.

They had to be smoothed with hard instruments. I was thinking at that time of the many parallels between the church as the temple of the Holy Spirit and Solomon's temple, and how God intends to perfect us as individuals and then assemble us into the New Jerusalem, as it were. The whole city is going to be the temple in the New Jerusalem, and we are that city.

We are the stones, but when God calls us initially, we are very imperfect. Of course, what He's preparing us for is to be fit with each other. What makes stones into a building is them being placed in relationship with other stones.

A stone by itself, or even a stack of stones that's not orderly, is not a building, not useful. You have to place each stone into a proper relationship with other stones. On top of another one, under another one, next to another one.

They all stand in some relationship to each other. But obviously, a rough stone cannot be put into a perfect relationship next to another rough stone. Each one has its own indentions and parts of it that stick out.

Those have to be leveled with a hammer and a chisel. The leveling process, if the stone had feelings, would hurt, because parts of it are being chipped away violently. But once they're chipped away, there is a smooth surface where there once was not.

Therefore, all kinds of thoughts rushed in my head. The thing from this particular verse was that all that work was done at the quarry. The stones were not taken to the temple site and then chiseled and hammered and perfected.

At the place where they came out of the ground. Then they were transported to the temple site and assembled. Sometimes people wonder, when we get saved, why doesn't God just take us right to heaven? After all, we wouldn't have any danger of backsliding then.

People do backslide. It seems like God would be wiser just to get people saved and take them to heaven. Just like it is reported, though I've never seen this in an authoritative document.

People have reported that there was a time in church history when the church used to baptize people and then kill them. So they wouldn't backslide and send them right to heaven. I don't know if that ever really happened.

But sometimes the mentality behind that suggestion commends itself. When you see

how people end up getting saved and falling away, you think, well, it would have been better for them if they had just gotten saved and died. In fact, we do know this historically, that in the first two and three centuries, it became very commonplace for a person to put off being baptized until their deathbed.

Because they believed that if you backslid or sinned after you were baptized, you're lost. And so people didn't want to be baptized until the danger of sinning, their last sin, was behind them. And so for that reason, Constantine, for example, did not get baptized until he was on his deathbed.

It was a fairly common practice. Because the idea is, once you become a Christian, there's the danger that you will fall away. So it seems better to die just after you're converted so you can go to heaven.

But that's not how God does things. Ideally, we get converted early in life and have a long life to serve God and to fight battles. Battles that we could possibly lose or win.

But the trials we have, in addition to being fighting the Lord's battles, are to do something to us. The reason that Jesus did not take us out of the world, remember what he said when he prayed in John 17, I do not pray that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the wicked one. Why didn't he say, I wish he would take us out of the world? We're all looking forward to that.

We're all looking forward to the rapture, right? That God will take us out of the world and that will be the end of our trials. Why did Jesus say, I pray you won't take them out of the world? And one reason certainly is that we need it. Now the world needs us too.

We're the light of the world. We have a ministry to the world. But we need the world's opposition as well.

We need the trials. We need the chisel. We need the difficulties.

These are the things, this is the crucible in which we are refined. This is the quarry at which we are chiseled. And it's not until we are chiseled and suitable that we are really ready to be assembled.

And so in heaven, there are no sounds of chisels and hammers and so forth. That's a place of peace. That's a place of worship.

That's not a place of, you know, if you're in heaven worshipping, you could hear all these people saying, ouch, you know, and whining and crying out because of the pains they're in. It would be somewhat less peaceful, you know. And so the temple site had to be peaceful.

The temple site had to be kept quiet and reverent there. The chiseling went on



somewhere else. And once it was done, then the stones were brought and assembled.

So this is how Solomon did things, and whether he consciously did it in order to represent some spiritual truth or not, I cannot say. But so much is reported in the scripture because of its value as a spiritual lesson. And the New Testament is very clear on making the building of the temple to be an analogy of the building of the church.

We are the stones. We are being shaped. We are being transformed.

We are being made like Jesus. And once those sides are smooth, then we'll be able to be in relation with each other perfectly. And that's what God is working on.

That's what God's trying to do. By the way, I also think that one way that God smooths the stones is the same that we polish agates. We polish stones in a rock tumbler.

And a rock tumbler is a confined area where you put a bunch of rocks that are rough and unfinished, and you agitate them. You tumble them. And the result is they knock against each other, and they chisel each other, as it were.

It's in that confined area where they are not able to get away that they are able to chip and chisel each other. When the rock tumbler is tumbling, every one of those rocks would like to get out. And it could avoid that friction, but it can't get out.

They're confined. And I think that God puts us in situations, relationships that we'd like to get out of because they're uncomfortable. But, you know, it's our parents.

We can't disown them. We can't ignore them. Or our husband or our wife or our children or people in the church that God has put us with.

Or a roommate in a certain situation where you're in school or something. People that you're in a confined rock polisher. And, you know, if you had your choice about you'd get out and avoid the conflict.

But the conflict is that which has the potential to chip away those things that are... I see some of our students talking about making allusions to their own roommates. But, you know, what's being chipped away is the part that's not like Jesus. Like the sculptor who was asked if it's hard to sculpt an elephant.

He said, no, it's quite easy. You get a block of marble, you chip away everything that doesn't look like an elephant. Yeah, well, how does God make us like Jesus? Well, he takes us, a block of marble, and he chips away everything that doesn't look like Jesus.

But that can be a painful process. But we have to appreciate the process because it's preparing us for assembly. And verse 8 says, The doorway of the middle for the middle story was on the right side of the temple, and they went up by stairs to the middle story and from the middle to the third.

So I guess they entered the ground floor just from a regular door at ground level. But to get to the middle or the third story, you had to go up to the middle story. And once you're inside the middle rooms, then there was an access to the third story.

So it would seem. So you couldn't just go directly from the ground to the third story. I'm sure there's something spiritual analogous there too, which I'm not able to discern.

I might have some ideas, but I don't have any confidence about them. 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 five cubits high.

They were attached to the temple with cedar beams. So 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 with you, which I spoke to your father David. Notice again, these promises God made to David or to Abraham or to anybody, he attaches conditions to the fulfillment of them.

He doesn't always appear to. He sometimes mentions the promises without mentioning the conditions. But he always at some other point mentions, well this is of course conditional.

There are no unconditional promises. He says, and I will dwell among the children of Israel, and I will not forsake my people Israel. 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 them on 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, that would be the Holy of Holies.

From floor to ceiling with cedar boards, he built it inside as the inner sanctuary, as the most holy place. And in front of it, the temple sanctuary was 40 cubits long. The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with ornamental buds and open flowers.

All was cedar, and there was no stone to be seen. Now the building was made of stone, but they paneled it so that none of the stone was visible from the inside. And he prepared the inner sanctuary, that would be the Holy of Holies, inside the temple to set the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord there.

The inner sanctuary was 20 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, 20 cubits high. So apparently, although the building itself was 30 cubits high, the section that contained the Holy of Holies was only 20 cubits high to make it the same cube shape. But that was the case with the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle.

Apparently, the cube shape was an important feature to retain. Other dimensions of the temple, like the height of the temple, could be changed, but not the height of the Holy of Holies. It had to retain this cube shape.

Now whether there were rooms above the Holy of Holies, or whether the overall height of the temple diminished in the rear third of it, I'm not clear on, but the interesting thing is the temple was generally taller, but it was reduced over the Holy of Holies to be cube shape. And of course, it is that cube shape that is significant, as we see the description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21. It's cube shape also.

Actually, it turns out to be about 1,500 miles by 1,500 miles by 1,500 miles cubed. But it is like the Holy of Holies. It has no natural light in it.

No sun or moon or stars shine there, but the glory of God is the light of the New Jerusalem. So also the Holy of Holies had no natural light or even artificial light. It had no windows and no lamps.

It was something that you went in and closed the doors behind you, you're in a totally dark room, unless God was there. And so it depended entirely on the presence of God for its light. And the New Jerusalem in Revelation, I believe, is an image of the church.

The church is the New Jerusalem, the city of God, and therefore it is like a great Holy of Holies. The church is where God dwells, and our true light is not natural or artificial, but is God himself, our light. So the inner sanctuary was 20 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 20 cubits high.

Verse 20 says, He overlaid it with pure gold and overlaid the altar of cedar. 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.

Then the whole temple he overlaid with gold until he had finished all the temple. Also he overlaid with gold the entire altar that was by the inner sanctuary. Inside the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim of olive wood, each 10 cubits high, 15 feet high.

Now these are not the ones on top of the ark. The ark, of course, had a solid gold lid called the mercy seat, and as one piece with that were two gold, solid gold cherubim, obviously considerably smaller than the ones described here. The cherubim on the ark are in addition to the cherubim that are standing now as statues within the Holy of Holies.

These ones are 15 feet tall. And it says in verse 24, One wing of the cherub was five cubits, the other wing of the cherub was five cubits, ten cubits from tip of one wing to the other tip of the other. That's 15 foot wingspan as well as 15 feet tall.

So they're kind of cube shaped as well, or at least square. And the other cherub was 10

cubits. Both cherubim were of the same size and shape.

The height of one cherub was 10 cubits, so that the other was that of the other cherub. Then he set the cherubim inside the inner room and they stretched out their wings, the wings of the cherubim, so that the wing of one touched one wall and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall. And their wings touched each other in the middle of the room.

You can see how that would be, of course. The room was 30 feet wide. Their wingspans were 15 feet wide each, and therefore they spanned the whole room with their four wings.

And their wings touched in the middle of the room. And under the middle two wings, no doubt, is where the ark and the smaller cherubim were found. The ones that were actually solid gold.

These ones were made of olive wood and then overlaid with gold. Okay, then also he overlaid the cherubim with gold and he carved all the walls of the temple all around, both the inner and the outer sanctuaries, with carved figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. And the floor of the temple he overlaid with gold, both the inner and the outer sanctuaries.

For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood. The lintel and the doorposts were one-fifth of the wall. Now, there was also a veil, but there were doors.

Apparently the division between the holy place and the holy of holies, unlike that in the tabernacle, had solid doors between them, but also there was a veil which covered the doors, apparently. For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood. We saw that, verse 32, the two doors were of olive wood, and he carved on them figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold.

And he spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees. So for the door of the sanctuary, that's the main entrance to the building, he also made doorposts of olive wood, one-fourth of the wall. So the entrance to the main building was a fourth the width of the whole wall.

And since the wall was 30 feet wide, there'd be a seven and a half feet wide doorway. But the door between the holy place and the holy of holies was only one-fifth the width of the wall, so it would be about six feet wide. And the two doors were of cypress wood, two panels comprised one folding door, and two panels comprised the other folding door.

So it was in four panels that kind of folded open. Then he carved cherubim, palm trees, and opened flowers on them, and overlaid them with gold, applied evenly on the carved work. And he built the inner court with three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar beams.

In the fourth year, the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid in the month of Ziv, Ziv. And in the seventh, excuse me, the eleventh year, so seven years later, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month of the year, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its details according to all its plans. So he was seven years in building it.

He was going to take 13 years to build his own house, but I don't know if that's because he worked slower or he just made a more elaborate house for himself than the temple, but it took almost twice as long on his own house. But seven years is a long time to have that temple under construction. To be doing business and coming and going in Jerusalem and seeing that under construction for so long, you probably begin to wonder when that thing is going to be opening.

But he took his time, he wanted to do it right, wanted to make the best temple in the world, and he did make a temple. That was esteemed to be one of the seven wonders of the world in its day. Let's stop there then and take our break and we'll come back to chapter 7 next time.