

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

1 KINGS 4-7

The 80 years David and his son, Solomon, reined over Israel were considered the *Golden Age of Hebrew History*. In the world at large, Homer was writing poetry in Greece. The dawning of Greek civilization had just begun... Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon – the traditional world powers - were in a state of decline... At the time, Israel was the most powerful nation on earth – the world’s lone superpower.

Solomon ruled over a global empire. He built alliances, and entered into trade agreements with foreign kings that brought unprecedented wealth to Israel.

He built a navy and a merchant marine. He opened up Israel to world markets, and in the process spread his fame, and reputation to the ends of the earth.

David won battles, and established a dynasty – Solomon took it to the next level. He expanded the kingdom, and God used him to make Israel great!

Tonight, we’re going to look at the achievements of King Solomon.

Chapter 4, “**So King Solomon was king over all Israel. And these were his officials:**” The first 19 verses list the members of Solomon’s administration...

“**Azariah the son of Zadok, the priest;**” the High Priest spoke for God.

“**Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha, scribes;**” the Secretaries of State

“**Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder;**” or State Historian – he managed the king’s legacy. You could compare him to the President’s Press Secretary.

“**Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, over the army;**” the chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs – the highest ranking military official... He replaces General Joab. This was a promotion for Benaiah. He served under David as the head of the FBI.

“**Zadok and Abiathar, the priests;**” Abiathar was Zadok’s predecessor.

“**Azariah the son of Nathan, over the officers;**” He was equivalent to the White House Chief of Staff. He managed the king’s schedule, agenda, and contacts.

“**Zabud the son of Nathan, a priest and the king's friend;**” the prophet Nathan was a wise confidant of David. Solomon became friends with his son, Zabud.

“**Ahishar, over the household;**” he ran the king’s family affairs.

“**and Adoniram the son of Abda, over the labor force.**” He was in charge of the slave labor and guilds of craftsmen Solomon employed in his building projects.

Verse 7, “**And Solomon had twelve governors over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each one made provision for one month of the year.**”

These are their names: **Ben-Hur, (I bet you didn’t know Charlton Heston lived back then.) in the mountains of Ephraim; Ben-Deker, in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon Beth Hanan; Ben-Hesed, in Arubboth; to him be-**

longed Sochoh and all the land of Hopher; Ben-Abinadab, in all the regions of Dor; he had Taphath the daughter of Solomon as wife;" Ben-Abinadab was the king's son-in-law – you can bet Solomon had his eye on this guy. Ben married a princess.

There's an old saying, "Marry a girl whose daddy calls "princess" - and you'll have to treat her like a queen." The king's little girl may've been a spoiled brat.

It's interesting the Hebrew name "Taphath" means "a dropping of ointment" – or "drip". Maybe Solomon was thinking of his son-in-law when he penned Proverbs 27:15, "A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike..." Both kinds of drips can get on your nerves and drive you nut-zo.

Verses 12-19 continue the list of governors and their jurisdictions. I'll let you read the names. They were revenue agents who collected taxes for Solomon and the central government. Each man was responsible for a month's support.

It's interesting the 12 divisions were not along tribal boundaries. For some reason Solomon divided the kingdom along non-traditional lines.

And this isn't a bad idea. The king was trying to reshuffle the deck. Break up a few unhealthy cliques and form new friendships and alliances. This is needed in the church. We tend to gravitate toward the people we know and like – and at times we need to be forced to reach out to new folks and create new bonds.

Verse 20, “Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing.” This was a golden age for Hebrew prosperity – a time of plenty - in both the north, Israel – and in the south, Judah.

“So Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the River (that is the Euphrates, not just the Jordan) to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt.”

They brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

“Now Solomon's provision for one day was 30 kors of fine flour, 60 kors of meal,” a “kor” consisted of about 55 gallons. Imagine, every morning the bread man pulled up to Solomon's royal kitchen with 30 55-gallon drums full of flour – and another 60 55-gallon drums packed with meal – or crushed grain.

Evidently, the king and his court liked to eat. Chowing down was a *core* activity.

In addition to the bread, each day they ordered “10 fatted oxen, 20 oxen from the pastures, and 100 sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl.”

Solomon was no vegetarian. He was a meat and bread man. Steak, and ribs, and lamb chops, and barbequed venison, and turkey, and pheasant, and duck.

I ate at a place once in Southern California called “The Brazillian Steak House”.

A group of pastors from Michigan made me go... You sat down and the waiter started serving you different varieties of meat. They brought the meat out on a spit. They literally cut it

off the bone - all kinds of meat – one after the other. Man, I ate until it hurt. Evidently, this is what went on every night at Solomon's table.

“For he had dominion over all the region on this side of the River (again the Euphrates) from Tiphseh (a city on the west bank of the Euphrates – in what would today be Syria) even to Gaza, namely over all the kings on this side of the River; and he had peace on every side all around him.” David conquered these kings, and won the victories. Solomon enjoyed the peace that followed.

“And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.” Dan was the northern boundary of Israel. Beersheba was the southern border. “From Dan as far as Beersheba” is like saying “from north to south” – all the land enjoyed peace.

And notice the expression “each man under his vine and his fig tree”. This was a picture of peace and prosperity. Every man kicked back in his hammock under the shade of his tree. He had not a care in the world. Life was good.

The phrase is used again in Isaiah 36:16, Micah 4:4, and Zechariah 3:10.

In Israel's difficult days this phrase was used prophetically of the end of the age when the Prince of Peace would return to the earth, and establish His kingdom.

Messiah will usher in a global peace. Micah 4 tells us, “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

neither shall they learn war any more. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid...”

Verse 26 “Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots, and 12,000 horsemen.” When we go to Israel we always visit Solomon’s stables in Megiddo. But he kept his horses in several locations scattered all around his kingdom.

“And these governors, each man in his month, provided food for King Solomon and for all who came to King Solomon's table. There was no lack in their supply. They also brought barley and straw to the proper place, for the horses and steeds, each man according to his charge.” They fed both Solomon and his cavalry.

“And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore.” Solomon was compassionate and kind - as well as wise. Here’s a man with a rare combination – “a quick mind and a big heart.” Most people are stubborn and stingy – narrow-minded and small hearted. Solomon was just the opposite. *He had an open mind and large heart.*

Solomon ruled with his head and his heart, verse 30, “Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt.

For he was wiser than all men - than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations.”

Ethan wrote Psalm 89. Heman sang Psalm 88. The other men we know nothing about, other than they must’ve been

the wisest guys of their day.

“He spoke 3000 proverbs, and his songs were 1005.” The book of Proverbs contains roughly 750 proverbs, which means we only have 25% of his repertoire.

And of his 1005 songs, we only have 3 – Psalms 72, 127, the Song of Solomon.

We’ll have to wait until heaven to read the complete works of King Solomon.

Look too at verse 33, “Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish.” Solomon was a student of science - a botanist and a zoologist. Verse 34 says, “And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.”

The king of Israel became a tourist attraction. Wise men from all over the world would journey to Jerusalem to match wits with the wisest king who had ever lived.

In chapter 5 Solomon prepares to build the Temple. “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 the LORD 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.” The blood David *shed* – the wars David *lead* – the

hostilities David *fed* - disqualified him from constructing the building God intended as a place of peace.

David was prohibited from building the Temple – the task inherited by Solomon.

“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,” Notice this language. “a house for the name...”

A pagan Temple was built as a house for the god himself. An idol became its occupant. But Solomon knew that no earthly structure could contain the Almighty God. In one of his songs, Psalm 72, Solomon writes, “Blessed be His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory.” Solomon knew Jehovah God fills the universe. The Temple was built to declare His name.

And “as the LORD 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.”

Solomon is quoting the promise God made to David in 2 Samuel 7:12.

His conversation with Hiram continues, “Now therefore, command that they cut down cedars for me from Lebanon (pic); 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 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 the LORD this day, for He has given David a wise son over this great people!" It's interesting that God used Gentiles to help the Hebrews build their Temple. This was forgotten by later Jews who grew to hate the Gentiles.

"Then Hiram sent to Solomon, saying: I have considered the message which you sent me, and I will do all 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 the place you indicate to me, and will have them broken apart there; then you can take them away. And you shall fulfill my desire by giving food for my household." The men of Tyre will work *tirelessly* for Solomon... all they ask in the form of payment is a little food... *and Solomon certainly had plenty to spare...*

"Then Hiram gave Solomon cedar and cypress logs according to all his desire.

And Solomon gave Hiram 20,000 kors of wheat as food for his household, and 20 kors 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.

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: they were one month in Lebanon and two months at home; Adoniram was in charge

of the labor force. 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 supervised the people who labored in the work.

The whole work force that labored on the Temple was 183,300 men. In the days of David the men of Israel were preoccupied with battle. It required a period of peace to free up the manpower needed for the construction.

Verse 17, “And the king commanded them to quarry large stones, costly stones, and hewn (engraved) stones, to lay the foundation of the temple.”

When we go to the Temple Mount you see the enormous stones used by the Romans in the rebuilding of the Temple in 40 BC. The stones in verse 17 predate the stones you see today, but they were probably just as large – if not larger.

“So Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the Gebalites quarried them; and they prepared timber and stones to build the temple.”

The construction of the Temple has inspired many Jewish legends.

Here's one quoted by Ginzberg, "During the seven years it took to build the Temple, not a single workman died who was employed about it, nor even did a single one fall sick. And as the workmen were sound and robust from first to last, so the perfection of their tools remained unimpaired until the building stood complete. Thus the work suffered no sort of interruption."

In chapter 5 Solomon makes preparations. In chapter 6 the construction begins

But before we delve into the details let me remind you that God is also building a Temple in our day. Not a temple made with hands - but a spiritual building. God is constructing a place today that will honor and declare His name and nature.

The New Testament tells us we are the Temple. Paul asked the believers in Corinth, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” Just as Solomon carved out stones to fit one on top of the other – 1 Peter 2 refers to members of the Church as “living stones”, and says we’re “being built up (into) a spiritual house”. We’re to offer sacrifices to God.

Jesus is a builder. He’s constructing a Temple today by making us fit – then by fitting our lives together - and coordinating our efforts to bring glory to His name.

In the Old Testament the Temple was the one place on earth where you were sure to find the presence of God. The Church serves the same purpose today.

Chapter 6, “And it came to pass in the 480th year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the 4th year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.” Verse 1 is extremely significant when it comes to the Old Testament timeline. The 4th year of Solomon’s reign was the 480th year after the exodus.

We know Solomon took over in 970 BC, which dates the Exodus at 1445 BC.

And Solomon began construction on the Temple in the Hebrew month of Ziv - or our April / May. He started the project in late spring after the rainy season.

Verse 2 provides dimensions for the Temple, “Now the house which King Solomon built for the LORD, its length was 60 cubits, its width 20, and its height 30 cubits.” If a cubit is 18” - the Temple was 90’ long, by 30’ wide, by 45’ high.

“The vestibule in front of the sanctuary of the house was 20 cubits long across the width of the house, and the width of the vestibule extended 10 cubits from the front of the house.” The Temple had a front porch – 30’ wide by 15’ deep.

“And he made for the house windows with beveled frames.” The windows were small on the outside, but grew larger on the inside. Very little light entered the Temple. The windows were just big enough for small birds... like sparrows.

Psalm 84 talks about the swallows and sparrows making a nest in the rafters. And the psalmist envies the birds for being able to live 24/7 in God’s presence.

“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.” When we constructed our building we cut costs by not giving ourselves any storage space. Over the years it’s been inconvenient.

But the Temple had plenty of storage. It had chambers all around the walls.

In fact, there were three levels of storage. “The lowest chamber was five cubits (or 7½’) wide, the middle was six cubits (9’) wide, and the third was seven cubits (or 10½’) 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.”

The outside walls of the Holy Place were tiered – three stories high.

And the beams were not fastened to the walls. There were no nail holes on the inside of the Temple. God is holy. There should be no blemish in His presence.

Verse 7 reveals an interesting point, “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 stones were cut exactly so they’d fit together without the use of fasteners or mortar. And they were sized and fitted off-sight. God wanted the Temple built in a peaceful atmosphere.

Hey, it’s not our busyness, and clamor that pleases God. It’s our faith, and trust, and rest in His will. Whenever you serve the Lord don’t create a lot of noise in the process. Some people will only serve the Lord if they can do it with a bang, and attract some attention to themselves. Hey, when you serve God keep it quiet.

We learn later in the Old Testament the only noise heard during the building of the Temple were the praises of the Levites. It was a strange construction site...

Verse 8 “The doorway for the middle story was on the right side of the temple. They went up by 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 five cubits high; they were attached to the temple with cedar beams.

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 with you, which I spoke to your father David. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel." So Solomon built the temple and finished it."

The outside of the Temple was stone, but the inner walls were all paneled with wood overlaid with gold. Verse 15, “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.” Stone is a dead inanimate object. Wood speaks of life. And there’s life in God’s presence.

“Then he built the twenty-cubit room at the rear of the temple, from floor to ceiling, with cedar boards; he built it inside as the inner sanctuary, as the Most Holy Place.” Solomon’s Temple had a similar layout to Moses’ Tabernacle.

There was an outer court that contained the bronze altar and lavers where the priests washed. Then the Temple proper – the 90 x 30 x 45’ structure consisted of two courts. The in-

nermost court or the Holy of Holies was 20 cubits or 30' square. Inside the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant and God's Shekinah glory.

In the Holy Place sat the Menorah, and Table of Shewbread, and Altar of Incense. On either end of the Holy Place was a veil of separation.

Here're dimensions of the Holy Place, "And in front of it the temple sanctuary was 40 cubits long (or 60'). The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with ornamental buds and open flowers. All was cedar; there was no stone to be seen.

And he prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple (the Holy of Holies), to set the ark of the covenant of the LORD there. The inner sanctuary was 20 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 20 cubits high (30 x 30 x 30 feet cubed). He overlaid it with pure gold, and overlaid the altar of cedar." Solomon spares no expense. The walls and floor in the Holy of Holies were all gold-plated.

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." Along with the veil this reinforced sinful man's forced separation from God.

"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 (these olive angels stood 15' high). One wing of the cherub was 5 cubits, and the other wing of

the cherub 5 cubits: 10 cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other.” The angels had a 15’ wingspan. “And the other cherub was ten cubits; both cherubim were of the same size and shape. The height of one cherub was ten cubits, and so was the other cherub.”

Hebrews 9:23 tells us the Tabernacle - and evidently the Temple that followed - were a small-scale model of God’s throne room in heaven. And whenever we’re allowed a glimpse into heaven we always see angels hovering above God’s throne. Solomon’s Temple also had its angels – made from olive wood.

In Revelation 4:6 when John sees the heavenly scene he sees FOUR living creatures. It’s interesting that Solomon makes two cherubim for the Temple - but you’ll recall the Ark also had two cherubim attached to the lid or mercy seat. That means Solomon also had a total of FOUR cherubim in the earthly Holy of Holies.

“Then he set the cherubim inside the inner room; and they stretched out the wings of the cherubim so that the wing of the 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. Also he overlaid the cherubim with gold.” Golden angels.

“Then he carved all the walls of the temple all around, both the inner and 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 outer sanctuaries.”

Before he died David stockpiled materials to be used in

Temple construction.

1 Chronicles 22:5, “David said, “Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries. I will now make preparation for it.”

Verse 14 mentions “100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant.” A talent was 100 pounds. Verse 16 sums it up, “Of gold and silver and bronze and iron there is no limit.”

In today’s gold market the Temple would’ve cost \$30 billion. Imagine a building with only 14,000 square feet of floor space at a price tag of \$30 billion. Solomon’s Temple represented the glory of God on earth. When folks saw it they whispered “Wow”. There has never been another building as lavish and as extravagant.

“For the entrance of the inner sanctuary (or Holy of Holies) he made doors of olive wood; the lintel (or header) and door-posts were one-fifth of the wall.”

It’s interesting the veil in the Tabernacle was replaced by a door in the Temple.

Of course someone will ask... why then when Jesus was crucified are we told the veil in the Temple tore from top to bottom? Hey, this was a different Temple.

Solomon’s structure was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC.

The Temple of Jesus’ day was called “The Second Temple” – it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel and refurbished and expanded by King Herod. It must’ve had a veil.

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 he also made doorposts of olive wood, one-fourth of the wall.

And the two doors were of cypress wood; two panels comprised one folding door, and two panels comprised the other folding door. (the double doors had a total of four panels). Then he carved cherubim, palm trees, and open 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.” That means the stones had to be 15’ high since the ceiling was 45 feet.

These were enormous stones – which made the Temple one of the wonders of the ancient world. This would’ve been a tough job for a modern construction crew.

What a contrast there was between the *Tabernacle* and the *Temple*...

The *Tabernacle* was temporary. The *Temple* was permanent.

The *Tabernacle* was erected in the desert - the *Temple* built on a mountain.

The *Tabernacle* was ugly to the eye. When you approached it all you saw were the dark, badger skins that served as its covering. On the other hand, the *Temple* glistened in the sunshine. Everyone in Jerusalem could see its beauty and glory.

It's interesting just as there were two dwellings for God on earth – the Tabernacle and later, the Temple – *there are two comings of Jesus. The Tabernacle represents His first advent - the Temple His second coming.*

The first time Jesus came to a desert land – marred by sin. At His second coming Jesus brings the mountain of God to earth. He purifies the planet.

The Tabernacle was ugly - whereas the Temple was glorious. You could only see the beauty of the Tabernacle from the inside. Likewise with Jesus - according to Isaiah 53, at His first appearance Jesus was without form and comeliness. He lacked physical attraction. But at His second appearance He'll radiate with glory.

His first coming was temporary. He lived a short life. Jesus was less than 40 years old when He was crucified. When Jesus comes again He'll rule forever.

Verse 37 **“In the 4th year the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid, in the month of Ziv. And in the 11th year, in the month of Bul (October / November), 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.”** Actually about 7½ years.

In chapter 7 the author pauses the discussion on the Temple to mention a few of Solomon's other architectural achievements... Verse 1 **“But Solomon took 13 years to build his own house; so he finished all his house.”** The king spent almost twice as long to build his palace as he took to build the Tem-

ple.

“He also built the House of the Forest of Lebanon; (which may’ve been a summer retreat) its length was 100 cubits, its width 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits, with 4 rows of cedar pillars, and cedar beams on the pillars. And it was paneled with cedar above the beams that were on 45 pillars, fifteen to a row.

There were windows with beveled frames in 3 rows, and window was opposite window in 3 tiers. And all the doorways and doorposts had rectangular frames; and window was opposite window in three tiers.” This was his summer palace.

Verse 6, “He also made the Hall of Pillars: its length was 50 cubits, and its width 30 cubits; and in front of them was a portico with pillars, and a canopy was in front of them.” This hall may’ve been an addition to the king’s palace in Jerusalem.

“Then he made a hall for the throne, the Hall of Judgment, where he might judge; and it was paneled with cedar from floor to ceiling. And the house where he dwelt had another court inside the hall, of like workmanship. Solomon also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken as wife.”

All these were of costly stones cut to size, trimmed with saws, inside and out, from the foundation to the eaves, and also on the outside to the great court.

The foundation was of costly stones, large stones, some 10 cubits and some 8 cubits.” Notice some of the stones Solomon’s builders worked with were 8-10 cubits long, or 12-

15 feet. These were huge stones. We have no idea how the builders manipulated them. Solomon's engineers were quite sophisticated.

This would make for a great episode of Extreme Engineering!

“And above were costly stones, hewn to size, and cedar wood. The great court was enclosed with 3 rows of hewn stones and a row of cedar beams. So were the inner court of the house of the LORD and the vestibule of the temple.

Verse 13 “Now King Solomon sent and brought Hiram from Tyre. He was the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, (or a half-Jew). And don't get confused, this is not King Hiram. This was another man “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.”

Solomon hires a man from Tyre to do the bronze work on his projects.

“And he cast two pillars of bronze, each one 18 cubits high (or 27'), and a line of 12 cubits (or 18') measured the circumference of each.” Two big columns.

Then he made two capitals of cast bronze, to set on the tops of the pillars.” The capitals were the caps placed on top of the pillars. They had an ornamental design.

“The height of one capital was five cubits, and the height of the other capital was five cubits.” The caps on top of the pillars extended their length 7½ feet.

“He made a lattice network, with wreaths of chainwork, for

the capitals which were on top of the pillars: 7 chains for one capital and 7 for the other capital. So he made the pillars, and two rows of pomegranates above the network all around to cover the capitals that were on top; and thus he did for the other capital.”

“The capitals which were on top of the pillars in the hall (He’s not talking about the Temple any longer, but the Hall of Judgment) were in the shape of lilies, four cubits. The capitals on the two pillars also had pomegranates above, by the convex surface which was next to the network; and there were 200 such pomegranates in rows on each of the capitals all around.”

Back to the Temple, “Then he set up the pillars by the vestibule of the temple; he set up the pillar on the right and called its name Jachin (which means “he shall establish”), and he set up the pillar on the left and called its name Boaz (which means “in Him is strength”). “The tops of the pillars were in the shape of lilies.

So the work of the pillars was finished.” The bronze posts were a reminder to the priests that *we’re established in God’s truth, and God sends us out in His strength!* The same statements are true for those of us who are in Christ.

Verse 23, “And he made the Sea of cast bronze, 10 cubits from one brim to the other (15’ in diameter); it was completely round. Its height was 5 cubits, and a line of 30 cubits measured its circumference (it was 7½’ high, 45’ in circumference).

Below its brim were ornamental buds encircling it all around, 10 to a cubit, all the way around the Sea. The ornamental buds were cast in two rows when it was cast. It stood on 12 oxen: three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; the Sea was set upon them, and all their back parts pointed inward.” This huge bowl or laver stood on the back on 12 ornamental oxen – each facing outward.

The sides of the Sea “was a handbreadth thick; and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It contained 2000 baths” (or 18,000 gallons of water). I don’t know how the ancients came up with the measurement - but if the normal bath requires 9 gallons – 2000 baths would equal 18,000 gallons.

We know from a parallel account of the Temple’s construction, in 2 Chronicles 4:1, Solomon also built a huge bronze altar where the sacrifices were offered.

The outer court of the Temple contained both *a mountain* and *a sea*.

And this depicted two types of cleansing... The blood cleanses the spirit of sin. The water washes dirt off the hands. Cleansing also comes today in two types.

A spiritual or inner cleansing takes place when we trust in the sacrifice of Jesus. But an outer cleansing – a refreshing of our mind – comes when we pour the water of God’s Word over our thought life and assumptions. We need both.

In addition to the bronze sea, **verses 27-39** tell us Solomon made 10 more lavers that sat on carts. I'll let you read about their construction on your own.

But I love the idea that God's cleansing was on wheels. It reminds me the Holy Spirit is never far from us when we need a washing and renewing of our attitude.

Verses 40-46 contain an inventory of all Hiram made for Solomon. **Verse 47** tells us they didn't even weigh the total amount of bronze - so much was used.

Verse 48, "Thus 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; the lampstands of pure gold, 5 on the right side and 5 on the left in front of the inner sanctuary, with the flowers and the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold;" Notice, the one Menorah in the Tabernacle was replaced with 10 golden lamp stands.

Verse 50 "the basins, the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner room (the Most Holy Place) and for the doors of the main hall of the temple."

Even the hinges on the doors were made of gold. "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."

Now the construction is finished. Solomon plans an “*open house*”... and guess who pays a visit? Of course, God Himself shows up at Solomon’s dedication.

And that’s where we’ll pick up next week – in 1 Kings 8...