

**MAY 15**

## **Construction of Cities and Royal Palace**

While the temple has been under construction, so too has been a royal palace for Solomon. The palace actually requires six more years to complete than the temple itself and includes separate dwellings for both Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter (whom he had married). Solomon's building program includes the construction or repair of many cities throughout his kingdom, a task accomplished through the use of forced labor by captives living within the country.

### **THIRTEEN YEARS IN BUILDING. [1 Kgs. 7:1]**

It took Solomon thirteen years, however, to complete the construction of his palace.

### **DESCRIPTION OF PALACE. [1 Kgs. 7:2–12]**

<sup>2</sup> He built the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon a hundred cubits long, fifty wide and thirty high, with four rows of cedar columns supporting trimmed cedar beams. <sup>3</sup> It was roofed with cedar above the beams that rested on the columns—forty-five beams, fifteen to a row. <sup>4</sup> Its windows were placed high in sets of three, facing each other. <sup>5</sup> All the doorways had rectangular frames; they were in the front part in sets of three, facing each other.

<sup>6</sup> He made a colonnade fifty cubits long and thirty wide. In front of it was a portico, and in front of that were pillars and an overhanging roof.

<sup>7</sup> He built the throne hall, the Hall of Justice, where he was to judge, and he covered it with cedar from floor to ceiling. <sup>8</sup> And the palace in which he was to live, set farther back, was similar in design. Solomon also made a palace like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had married.

<sup>9</sup> All these structures, from the outside to the great courtyard and from foundation to eaves, were made of blocks of high-grade stone cut to size and smoothed on their inner and outer faces. <sup>10</sup> The foundations were laid with large stones of good quality, some measuring ten cubits and some

eight. <sup>11</sup> Above were high-grade stones, cut to size, and cedar beams. <sup>12</sup> The great courtyard was surrounded by a wall of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams, as was the inner courtyard of the temple of the LORD with its portico.

## **GOD COVENANTS WITH SOLOMON. [1 Kgs. 9:1–9; 2 Chron. 7:11–22]**

When Solomon had finished the temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and had succeeded in carrying out all he had in mind to do in the temple of the LORD and in his own palace, the LORD appeared to him at night and said:

“I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices.

“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.

“As for you, if you walk before me faithfully as David your father did, and do all I command, and observe my decrees and laws, I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor to rule over Israel.’

“But if you turn away and forsake the decrees and commands I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, then I will uproot Israel from my land, which I have given them, and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. I will make it a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. This temple will become a heap of rubble. All who pass by will be appalled and say, ‘Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’ People will answer, ‘Because they have forsaken the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who brought them out of Egypt, and

have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why he brought all this disaster on them.’ ”

### **HIRAM DISPLEASED. [1 Kgs. 9:10–14 Galilee]**

<sup>10</sup> At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon built these two buildings—the temple of the LORD and the royal palace— <sup>11</sup> King Solomon gave twenty towns in Galilee to Hiram king of Tyre, because Hiram had supplied him with all the cedar and juniper and gold he wanted. <sup>12</sup> But when Hiram went from Tyre to see the towns that Solomon had given him, he was not pleased with them. <sup>13</sup> “What kind of towns are these you have given me, my brother?” he asked. And he called them the Land of Kabul, a name they have to this day. <sup>14</sup> Now Hiram had sent to the king 120 talents of gold.

### **HIRAM RETURNS CITIES. [2 Chron. 8:1, 2]**

**8** At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon built the temple of the LORD and his own palace, <sup>2</sup> Solomon rebuilt the villages that Hiram had given him, and settled Israelites in them.

### **CAPTURE OF HAMATH. [2 Chron. 8:3]**

Solomon then went to Hamath Zobah and captured it.

### **BUILDING OF CITIES. [1 Kgs. 9:17–19; 2 Chron. 8:4–6]**

He also built up Tadmor in the desert and all the store cities he had built in Hamath. He rebuilt Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon as fortified cities, with walls and with gates and bars, as well as Baalath and all his store cities, and all the cities for his chariots and for his horses—whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled.

## **USE OF FORCED LABOR. [1 Kgs. 9:20–23, 15; 2 Chron. 8:7–10]**

There were still people left from the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (these peoples were not Israelites). Solomon conscripted the descendants of all these peoples remaining in the land—whom the Israelites could not exterminate—to serve as slave labor, as it is to this day. But Solomon did not make slaves of any of the Israelites; they were his fighting men, his government officials, his officers, his captains, and the commanders of his chariots and charioteers. They were also the chief officials in charge of Solomon’s projects—550 officials supervising those who did the work.

Here is the account of the forced labor King Solomon conscripted to build the LORD’s temple, his own palace, the terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer.

## **NEW HOUSE FOR WIFE. [1 Kgs. 9:24; 2 Chron. 8:11 Jerusalem]**

Solomon brought Pharaoh’s daughter up from the City of David to the palace he had built for her, for he said, “My wife must not live in the palace of David king of Israel, because the places the ark of the LORD has entered are holy.”

## **NAVY FORMED WITH HIRAM. [1 Kgs. 9:26–28; 10:22; 2 Chron. 8:17, 18; 9:21]**

King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea. And Hiram sent his men—sailors who knew the sea—to serve in the fleet with Solomon’s men. They sailed to Ophir and brought back 420 talents of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon. The king had a fleet of trading ships at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.

## Extent of Solomon's Glory

Because Solomon had asked for wisdom instead of wealth, God promised to give him both—wisdom beyond all men, and untold riches. Over the years of Solomon's reign, God's promise has become reality. Solomon's kingdom has developed into the most peaceful and prosperous kingdom ever known. Solomon's glory is documented not only by official statistics but also by the visit of the Queen of Sheba. The visit itself is altogether remarkable, particularly because the queen's home in southern Arabia (perhaps the modern country of Yemen) is a 1200-mile camel ride across hot desert territories inhabited by roving groups of bandits ready to relieve the queen of the treasure which she carries. What motivates her to come so great a distance is far more than mere curiosity at Solomon's wealth. It is the search for wisdom and insight which compels her (as it has compelled people of all times), and she is not in the least disappointed.

### **SOLOMON'S WISDOM. [1 Kgs. 4:29–34]**

<sup>29</sup> God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. <sup>30</sup> Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. <sup>31</sup> He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. <sup>32</sup> He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. <sup>33</sup> He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. <sup>34</sup> From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

### **SOLOMON'S WEALTH. [1 Kgs. 10:14–21, 27, 23–25; 2 Chron. 1:15; 9:13–20, 27, 22–24]**

The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents, not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the territories.

King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred shekels of gold went into each shield. He also made three hundred

small shields of hammered gold, with three minas of gold in each shield. The king put them in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

Then the king made a great throne covered with ivory and overlaid with fine gold. The throne had six steps, and its back had a rounded top. On both sides of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each of them. Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom. All King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's days. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills.

King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift—articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules.

### **HORSES AND CHARIOTS. [1 Kgs. 4:26; 10:26, 28, 29; 2 Chron. 1:14, 16, 17; 9:25, 28]**

Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. Solomon had four thousand stalls for chariot horses, and twelve thousand horses. Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue—the royal merchants purchased them from Kue at the current price. They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.

### **EXTENT OF KINGDOM. [1 Kgs. 4:21, 24; 2 Chron. 9:26]**

And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life. For he ruled over all the

kingdoms west of the Euphrates River, from Tiphseh to Gaza, and had peace on all sides.

### **SECURITY OF KINGDOM. [1 Kgs. 4:20, 25]**

<sup>20</sup> The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy.

<sup>25</sup> During Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree.

### **SOLOMON'S PRINCES. [1 Kgs. 4:1–6]**

<sup>4</sup> So King Solomon ruled over all Israel. <sup>2</sup> And these were his chief officials:

Azariah son of Zadok—the priest;

<sup>3</sup> Elihoreph and Ahijah, sons of Shisha—secretaries;

Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud—recorder;

<sup>4</sup> Benaiah son of Jehoiada—commander in chief;

Zadok and Abiathar—priests;

<sup>5</sup> Azariah son of Nathan—in charge of the district governors;

Zabud son of Nathan—a priest and adviser to the king;

<sup>6</sup> Ahishar—palace administrator;

Adoniram son of Abda—in charge of forced labor.

## **SOLOMON'S COMMISSARIES. [1 Kgs. 4:7–19]**

<sup>7</sup> Solomon had twelve district governors over all Israel, who supplied provisions for the king and the royal household. Each one had to provide supplies for one month in the year. <sup>8</sup> These are their names:

Ben-Hur—in the hill country of Ephraim;

<sup>9</sup> Ben-Deker—in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh and Elon Bethhanan;

<sup>10</sup> Ben-Hesed—in Arubboth (Sokoh and all the land of Hephher were his);

<sup>11</sup> Ben-Abinadab—in Naphoth Dor (he was married to Taphath daughter of Solomon);

<sup>12</sup> Baana son of Ahilud—in Taanach and Megiddo, and in all of Beth Shan next to Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth Shan to Abel Meholah across to Jokmeam;

<sup>13</sup> Ben-Geber—in Ramoth Gilead (the settlements of Jair son of Manasseh in Gilead were his, as well as the region of Argob in Bashan and its sixty large walled cities with bronze gate bars);

<sup>14</sup> Ahinadab son of Iddo—in Mahanaim;

<sup>15</sup> Ahimaaz—in Naphtali (he had married Basemath daughter of Solomon);

<sup>16</sup> Baana son of Hushai—in Asher and in Aloth;

<sup>17</sup> Jehoshaphat son of Paruah—in Issachar;

<sup>18</sup> Shimei son of Ela—in Benjamin;

<sup>19</sup> Geber son of Uri—in Gilead (the country of Sihon king of the Amorites and the country of Og king of Bashan). He was the only governor over the district.

## **PROVISIONS FOR SOLOMON. [1 Kgs. 4:22, 23, 27, 28]**

<sup>22</sup> Solomon's daily provisions were thirty cors of the finest flour and sixty cors of meal,

<sup>23</sup> ten head of stall-fed cattle, twenty of pasture-fed cattle and a hundred sheep and goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks and choice fowl.

<sup>27</sup> The district governors, each in his month, supplied provisions for King Solomon and all who came to the king's table. They saw to it that nothing was lacking

<sup>28</sup> They also brought to the proper place their quotas of barley and straw for the chariot horses and the other horses.

## **VISIT BY QUEEN OF SHEBA. [1 Kgs. 10:1–13; 2 Chron. 9:1–12 Jerusalem]**

When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relationship to the LORD, she came to test Solomon with hard questions. Arriving at Jerusalem with a very great caravan—with camels carrying spices, large quantities of gold, and precious stones—she came to Solomon and talked with him about all that she had on her mind. Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too hard for the king to explain to her. When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed.

She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard. How happy your people must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king to maintain justice and righteousness."

And she gave the king 120 talents of gold, large quantities of spices, and precious stones. Never again were so many spices brought in as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

(Hiram's ships brought gold from Ophir; and from there they brought great cargoes of almugwood and precious stones. The king used the almugwood to make supports for the temple of the LORD and for the royal palace, and to make harps and lyres for the musicians. So much almugwood has never been imported or seen since that day.)

King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for, besides what he had given her out of his royal bounty. Then she left and returned with her retinue to her own country.

### **[Psa. 72:1–19] Solomon celebrates his blessings.**

#### **Of Solomon.**

- <sup>1</sup> Endow the king with your justice, O God,  
the royal son with your righteousness.
- <sup>2</sup> May he judge your people in righteousness,  
your afflicted ones with justice.
- <sup>3</sup> May the mountains bring prosperity to the people,  
the hills the fruit of righteousness.
- <sup>4</sup> May he defend the afflicted among the people  
and save the children of the needy;  
may he crush the oppressor.
- <sup>5</sup> May he endure as long as the sun,  
as long as the moon, through all generations.
- <sup>6</sup> May he be like rain falling on a mown field,  
like showers watering the earth.
- <sup>7</sup> In his days may the righteous flourish  
and prosperity abound till the moon is no more.
- <sup>8</sup> May he rule from sea to sea  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
- <sup>9</sup> May the desert tribes bow before him  
and his enemies lick the dust.

<sup>10</sup> May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores  
bring tribute to him.

May the kings of Sheba and Seba  
present him gifts.

<sup>11</sup> May all kings bow down to him  
and all nations serve him.

<sup>12</sup> For he will deliver the needy who cry out,  
the afflicted who have no one to help.

<sup>13</sup> He will take pity on the weak and the needy  
and save the needy from death.

<sup>14</sup> He will rescue them from oppression and violence,  
for precious is their blood in his sight.

<sup>15</sup> Long may he live!  
May gold from Sheba be given him.

May people ever pray for him  
and bless him all day long.

<sup>16</sup> May grain abound throughout the land;  
on the tops of the hills may it sway.

May the crops flourish like Lebanon  
and thrive like the grass of the field.

<sup>17</sup> May his name endure forever;  
may it continue as long as the sun.

Then all nations will be blessed through him,  
and they will call him blessed.

<sup>18</sup> Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel,  
who alone does marvelous deeds.

<sup>19</sup> Praise be to his glorious name forever;  
may the whole earth be filled with his glory.

Amen and Amen.

## Questions

1. What were three of the structures that Solomon had built?  
(1 Kings 7:7-8)
2. What did the Lord tell Solomon about the effectiveness of his prayers and the building of the temple? (2 Chron. 7:12)
3. Why did Solomon not want Pharaoh's daughter living in David's palace where the ark of the Lord was kept? (2 Chron. 8:11)
4. How rich was Solomon and the nation of Israel? (2 Chron. 9:22-28)
5. How does reading about all of Solomon's exquisite possessions, followed by the account of his death, help to put life into perspective for you?