

1 Kings 05 - Preparations to Build the Temple; Solomon's Treaty with Hiram

I. United kingdom under Solomon (1 Kings 1:1—11:43)

(3) Solomon builds the Temple (1 Kings 5:1—8:66)

(A) Solomon makes preparation for Temple construction (5:1-18)

(a) Solomon contracts with Hiram for materials (5:1-12)

(b) Solomon provides workers, administrators, and materials (5:13-18)

1 Kings 5

(3) Solomon builds the Temple (1 Kings 5:1—8:66)

(A) Solomon makes preparation for Temple construction (5:1-18) (Cf. 2 Chr 2:1-18)

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1 King Hiram of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon when he learned that Solomon had been anointed king to replace his father, because Hiram had been David's lifelong friend.

1 And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David.

- Tyre was an important port city on the Mediterranean Sea north of Israel. It was one of the chief cities of Phoenicia, one of Israel's friendly neighboring kingdoms.

— Hiram, king of Tyre, (c980–947 BC) had been an ally and friend of King David. After David had conquered the stronghold of Zion, he made a permanent treaty of peace with the king.

— Hiram had assisted David in his public works by sending laborers and cedar wood from the Lebanon Mountains to Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:11; 2 Chr 2:3-4)

— Hiram sent his envoys to Solomon to pay his respects to the new king, the son of his friend.

2 Then Solomon sent *word* to Hiram, saying,

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2 Solomon sent this message to Hiram:

2 And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying,

- Solomon seized the opportunity to include Hiram and his resources in the monumental work of building the Lord's temple

3 "You know that David my father was unable to build a house for the name of the LORD his God because of the wars which surrounded him, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

3 "You know that David my father was unable to build a house for the name of the Lord his God because of the wars which surrounded him, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

3 "You know that my father David was unable to build a temple dedicated to the LORD his God because he was busy fighting wars all around him until the LORD defeated his enemies.

3 Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

4 But now the LORD my God has secured me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune.

4 But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune.

4 But now the LORD has given me rest all around, since I have neither foreign adversaries nor domestic crises.

4 But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.

- Through David's military victories, Solomon inherited a powerful nation at peace with its neighbors (1 Chr 18:1-13)

5 So behold, I intend to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, just as the LORD spoke to David my father, saying, 'Your son, whom I will put on your throne in your place, he will build the house for My name.'

5 Behold, I intend to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spoke to David my father, saying, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he will build the house for My name.'

5 So now I'm planning to build a temple dedicated to the LORD my God, just as the LORD told my father when he said, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne to replace you, will build the Temple dedicated to me.'

5 And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy

room, he shall build an house unto my name.

- David had shared with Hiram his desire to build a temple. But because of the wars David had to fight, he was not allowed to construct it.

— Now peace prevailed (Cf. 4:24-25) and construction could begin. Solomon's assurance of peace would have encouraged Hiram to cooperate with his plans. His intention was to build the temple God Himself had approved.

6 Now then, issue orders that they cut cedars from Lebanon for me, and my servants will be with your servants; and I will give you wages for your servants in accordance with all that you say, for you yourself know that there is no one among us who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians."

6 Now therefore, command that they cut for me cedars from Lebanon, and my servants will be with your servants; and I will give you wages for your servants according to all that you say, for you know that there is no one among us who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians."

6 Now therefore please order that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me. My servants will work with your servants, and I will pay your servants whatever wages you set, because you know there is no one among us who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians do."

6 Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.

- Solomon called on Hiram to give orders that his subjects provide materials and craftsmen for the project

— While the western slopes of the Lebanon Mountains must have been extensively covered with cedars in Solomon's day, only a few hundred of these trees remain today

— Having taken hundreds of years to grow, these trees were valuable for building purposes because of the beauty of the wood and its extreme bitterness, which repelled insects and worms, and thus it did not decay as rapidly as other woods

— Solomon offered to supply workers to assist Hiram's men in felling the trees and to pay the Sidonian laborers whatever Hiram considered a fair wage. The Sidonians were indeed highly skilled in felling timber; doubtless Solomon's recognition of this ability impressed Hiram favorably.

— Solomon did not try to take advantage of his less powerful neighbor, but offered to pay whatever wages Hiram set, and sent Israelites to work alongside Hiram's men

— Sidon, another Phoenician city, was north of Tyre. Apparently Hiram hired workers from there.

7 When Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he greatly rejoiced; and he said, "Blessed be the LORD today, who has given to David a wise son over this great people."

7 When Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he rejoiced greatly and said, "Blessed be the LORD today, who has given to David a wise son over this great people."

7 As soon as Hiram received the message from Solomon, he became so ecstatic that he exclaimed, "Blessed be the LORD today, who has given David a wise son to rule this great people!" Then he sent this message to Solomon:

7 And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.

- The fact that Hiram cooperated with, and even blessed, Yahweh shows how God brought blessing to Gentiles as well as Israelites through David and Solomon's dedication to the Lord

- Whatever Hiram's beliefs about Yahweh, his response shows that people notice when believers base their lives on God's promises

8 So Hiram sent *word* to Solomon, saying, "I have heard *the message* which you sent me; I will do everything you wish concerning the cedar and juniper timber.

8 So Hiram sent *word* to Solomon, saying, "I have heard *the message* which you have sent me; I will do what you desire concerning the cedar and cypress timber.

8 "I have read the letter that you sent me. I'll do what you've asked about the cedar and cypress timber.

8 And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.

- Apparently Solomon's total message to Hiram (v3-6) was not recorded by the author of 1 and 2 Kings since Hiram agreed to provide pine as well as cedar logs

9 My servants will bring *the timbers* down from Lebanon to the sea; and I will have them made into rafts *to go* by sea to the place where you direct me, and I will have them broken up there, and you will carry *them* away. Then you shall do what I wish, by giving food to my household."

9 My servants will bring *them* down from Lebanon to the sea; and I will make them into rafts *to go* by sea to the place where you direct me, and I will have them broken up there, and you shall carry *them* away. Then you shall accomplish my desire by giving food to my household."

9 My servants will transport them from Lebanon to the sea, where we'll make them into rafts and float them by sea to the port that you tell me to send them. We'll have them

prepared for transport there and then you can carry them from there. You can meet my needs by providing provisions for my household."

9 My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household.

- The lumber would be carried from the forest to the sea, and from there it would be floated by rafts along the Mediterranean coast to a designated port of reception

— However, Hiram wanted something in return: food for his royal household.

— Hiram guaranteed his continued aid and goodwill to Solomon by a trade agreement, stipulating that in exchange for Tyrian wood and stone, Solomon would furnish him with agricultural products (2 Chr 2:3ff)

10 So Hiram gave Solomon all that he wished of the cedar and juniper timber.

10 So Hiram gave Solomon as much as he desired of the cedar and cypress timber.

10 That's how Hiram came to provide Solomon as much cedar and cypress timber as he needed.

10 So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire.

11 Solomon then gave Hiram twenty thousand kors of wheat as food for his household, and twenty kors of pure oil; this is what Solomon would give Hiram year by year.

11 Solomon then gave Hiram 20,000 kors of wheat as food for his household, and twenty kors of beaten oil; thus Solomon would give Hiram year by year.

11 In return, Solomon paid Hiram 20,000 kors of wheat as food for his household, and 20 kors of beaten oil. Solomon provided this amount every year during the construction.

11 And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.

- Solomon agreed to the arrangement and each year gave him 130,000 bushels of wheat and 20,000 baths (c115,000 gallons) of olive oil. Barley and wine were also included (2 Chr 2:10).

— Hiram had a large household, which no doubt included his courtiers as well as family members

— Apparently wheat and olive oil were not plentifully available in or near Tyre

12 And the LORD gave wisdom to Solomon, just as He promised him; and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a covenant.

12 The LORD gave wisdom to Solomon, just as He promised him; and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a covenant.

12 The LORD continued giving Solomon wisdom, just as he had promised, and Hiram and Solomon entered into a peace treaty between themselves.

12 And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.

- Due to Solomon's wise initiative (the LORD gave Solomon wisdom; Cf. 1 Kings 3:12,28; 4:29) this treaty arrangement continued for many years and contributed to peaceful relations between the two kings

— A temporary rift in the friendship occurred when Solomon turned twenty of the cities in Galilee over to Hiram in exchange for some large shipments of gold, and Hiram found the cities displeasing (9:11-14)

— However, the rift was subsequently healed, and the two kings engaged in profitable trade with each other (10:22)

(b) Solomon provides workers, administrators, and materials (5:13-18) (Cf. 2 Chr 2:1-2,7,17-18)

13 Now King Solomon conscripted forced laborers from all Israel; and the forced laborers *numbered* thirty thousand men.

13 Now King Solomon levied forced laborers from all Israel; and the forced laborers numbered 30,000 men.

13 King Solomon conscripted laborers from throughout Israel. The work force numbered 30,000 men.

13 And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.

- Solomon's conscripted laborers were non-Israelites (Cf. 2 Chr 8:7-8); Israelites also served, but they were not slaves (9:22; Cf. 2 Sam 12:31; 20:24)

— Solomon's method of providing workers for state projects later became distasteful to the people, perhaps because of how it was administered (Cf. 12:18)

14 Then he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month in shifts; they were in Lebanon for a month, *and* two months at home. And Adoniram *was* in charge of the forced laborers.

14 He sent them to Lebanon, 10,000 a month in relays; they were in Lebanon a month *and* two months at home. And Adoniram *was* over the forced laborers.

14 He sent 10,000 men to Lebanon in shifts lasting one month. They worked one month in Lebanon for every two months they worked at home. Adoniram was placed in charge of the conscripted labor.

14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy.

- Adoniram (aka Hadoram, 2 Chr 10:18), who was placed over the levy, came to be one of the most hated men in Israel, an embodiment of autocracy (12:18)

— In addition, Solomon had 70,000 transporters and 80,000 stonecutters working in the mountains to the north

— It appears that all the able-bodied males, except the members of the royal court, were engaged in some employment concerned with the construction of the Temple

15 Now Solomon had seventy thousand porters, and eighty thousand stonemasons in the mountains,

15 Now Solomon had 70,000 transporters, and 80,000 hewers *of stone* in the mountains,

15 Solomon also employed 70,000 heavy-lift workers and 80,000 stonecutters in the hill country.

15 And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;

16 besides Solomon's 3,300 chief deputies who *were* in charge of the project *and* ruled over the people who were doing the work.

16 besides Solomon's 3,300 chief deputies who *were* over the project *and* who ruled over the people who were doing the work.

16 Solomon also employed 3,300 officials to supervise the work and to manage the people employed in the construction.

16 Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

- The 3,300 foremen plus an additional 550 (9:23) equal 3,850 (Cf. the 3,600 foremen in 2 Chr 2:18 plus 250 in 2 Chr 8:10)

A minor detail shows us how seeming contradictions in the Bible may instead demonstrate its complete trustworthiness. Kings and Chronicles list different numbers of overseers. However, the numbers in each book add up to 3,850. How can this be? Chronicles distinguishes 3,600 foreign overseers from 250 Israelites overseers. Kings distinguishes by category—3,300 lower and 550 higher overseers, of whom 250 were Israelite and 300 were Canaanite (Cf. 9:23; 2 Chr 2:18; 8:10).

17 Then the king issued orders, and they quarried large stones, valuable stones, to lay the foundation of the house with cut stones.

17 Then the king commanded, and they quarried great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house with cut stones.

17 The king specified that large, expensive stones be quarried so the foundation of the Temple could be laid with cut stones.

17 And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

- Solomon's temple rested on massive limestone blocks that he had quarried from the hills north of Jerusalem

18 So Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gebalites cut *the stones*, and they prepared the timbers and the stones to build the house.

18 So Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gebalites cut them, and prepared the timbers and the stones to build the house.

18 As a result, Solomon's builders worked with Hiram's builders, accompanied by the Gebalites, to quarry the stone and to prepare the timber and other stone for the Temple's construction.

18 And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

- Working under Adoniram (Cf. 4:6), the carriers transported materials from place to place and the stonecutters cut massive limestone blocks out of the quarry in the hills north of Jerusalem

Application

The main emphasis in this chapter is on the favorable response of the Phoenician king, Hiram, with which God blessed Israel through Solomon's wisdom (v7). Solomon wrote that "when a person's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov 16:7). Such was God's blessing on Solomon at this time.