

1 Kings 6 -- Read from NLT to understand measurements in plain language

(Corresponds roughly with 2 Chronicles 3)

Solomon builds the Temple in Jerusalem. This is the culmination of God's promise to David as well as David's exhortation to his son, Solomon. This is kind of a neat intersection of God's will and man's responsibility.

God's word has dictated the work and the work has been taken in hand eagerly by Solomon.

V.1 - The Bible captures specific dates, historical figures, names, and events for us on purpose. These facts anchor us in reality and add texture to our understanding of when and where the events of the Bible unfolded in real-time with real-people.

Considering this fact further we see that the scope of Biblical literature is in fact quite limited given the vastness of world history that also surrounded the text, and was excluded from the narrative.

That author notes that it has been 480 years since Israel's captivity. This is significant in Israel's history and it is significant spiritually. Bear in mind that the Passover was instituted to commemorate and communicate God's rescue of His people from Egypt.

Note that this date doesn't mean 480 years of goodness among the Israelites. While they had been free for generations they were still very much subject to "the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life."

They had fallen many times since their rescue and yet they still remained God's children - this text actually recounting a high-point in their history.

V.2-6 - The Temple is referred to as a house or a Temple for the Lord. What does, "for the Lord," mean?

It isn't as if God NEEDS a place to lay His head.

[2Sa 7:5-11 NLT] 5 "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD has declared: Are you the one to build a house for me to live in? 6 I have never lived in a house, from the day I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until this very day. I have always moved from one place to another with a tent and a Tabernacle as my dwelling. 7 Yet no matter where I have gone with the Israelites, I have never once complained to Israel's tribal leaders, the shepherds of my people Israel. I have never asked them, "Why haven't you built me a beautiful cedar house?"' 8 "Now go and say to my servant David, 'This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies has declared: I took you from tending sheep in the pasture and selected you to be the leader of my people Israel. 9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before your eyes. Now I will make your name as famous as anyone who has ever lived on the earth! 10 And I will provide a homeland for my people Israel, planting them in a secure place where they will never be disturbed. Evil nations won't oppress them as they've done in the past, 11 starting from the time I appointed judges to rule my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. "Furthermore, the LORD declares that he will make a house for you...

God isn't confined by human buildings, He has used them for His good purposes to teach His people about who he is.

Remember that all creation is formed by His word. Whenever we think that we have built a house for God, that we are providing something for God that He hasn't created by His own word then we have become deluded!

The Temple is no different - while it entered into the heart of man to build a temple for God, as in David's case, ultimately it is God's will, direction, purpose and glory that are to be communicated in the earthly ordinances and institutions of His people.

Notice that the Temple is a series of rooms, and constructs all surrounding a middle sanctuary. It is not just one giant open room but a complex of carefully designed and constructed areas.

As we go through, note the various areas - each area uniquely reserved for a particular type of person.

In this we see that the Temple is constructed with reminders and delineations between types of people and between God and people.

[Heb 9:2-12 NKJV] 2 For a tabernacle was prepared: the first [part], in which [was] the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; 3 and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, 4 which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which [were] the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; 5 and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. 6 Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. 7 But into the second part the high priest [went] alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and [for] the people's sins [committed] in ignorance; 8 the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. 9 It [was] symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who

performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience-- 10 [concerned] only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. 11 But Christ came [as] High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

V.6c-10 There were even complex methods and modes of construction used to symbolize the “holiness” of the building (ie. no beams inserted into the walls; no sound of an iron tool at the building site).

God’s method of building up is marked by peace and preparedness.

“Here, it seems, the preparation was more than ordinarily full and exact, to such a degree that, when the several parts came to be put together, there was nothing defective to be added, nothing amiss to be amended. It was to be the temple of God of peace, and therefore no iron tool must be heard in it. Quietness and

silence both become and befriend...God's work should be done with as much care and as little noise as may be. The temple was thrown down with axes and hammers, and those that threw it down roared *in the midst of the congregation* (Ps. 74:4, 6); but it was built up in silence. Clamour and violence often hinder the work of God, but never further it." (Matthew Henry)

V.11-13 God speaks to Solomon of a conditional covenant - IF you do this...THEN I will do this...

As Solomon set out to build the Temple he desired for the presence of God to be among the people. This is something that no building can guarantee. Many splendid buildings have been constructed over the ages that are dead, lifeless, completely devoid of holiness.

The building could never make the people holy, but it could communicate God's holiness.

The requirement that God sets forth as a condition to be near Him is holiness -- "walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments." This is an unchanging truth.

[Deu 5:29 NKJV] 29 'Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!

God's desire was that Israel would grow to know Him, adopt His ways, His heart, His holiness. But, the language He uses implies their proneness to wander. The witness of history is that God's people, chosen by Him, did not/do not have a heart to follow Him all of their days.

The same is true for us even in the face of our protests to the contrary as captured in Joshua:

[Jos 24:14-21 NKJV] 14 "Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! 15 "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." 16 So the

people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods...We also will serve the LORD, for He [is] our God." 19 But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for He [is] a holy God. He [is] a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. 20 "If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good." 21 And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD!"

Following God closely meant following the Law closely!

But, as Paul clearly sets forth in his letters to the churches - the law brings forth the knowledge of sin, it brings forth transgression, it teaches us of our unholiness and God's righteous justice. It teaches us that God MUST punish/eradicate sin.

[Gal 3:10-11 NKJV] 10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed [is] everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." 11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God [is] evident, for "the just shall live by faith."

Why were some of God's covenants conditional? To demonstrate God's sovereignty and power.

In the face of our best efforts to perform religious theater, to prove our holiness, we fail. We are found under the Curse.

It is in that state that God speaks forth His power by grace as He acknowledges our failure, we acknowledge our failure, and we receive His mercy and grace.

Then, He uses broken unrighteous vessels, jars of clay as it were, applies His righteousness through the blood of Christ to His people and shows all creation that He is truly Lord over all -- life, death, sin and holiness.

Some may stand back and say in our foolishness, "Why all of the drama and time and iterations of good and evil then!? Why couldn't God just wrap this up!?"

This question is addressed with Pharaoh during Israel's captivity. That is a perfect example of why God chooses to go the long way with His creation.

[Exo 9:15-16 NKJV] 15 "Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. 16 "But indeed for this [purpose] I have raised you up, that I may show My power [in] you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.

[Exo 10:1-2 NKJV] 1 Now the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him, 2 "and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I [am] the LORD."

The result of God's work, carried out among the nations, is a message of clarity - that He is God above and we are the creation subject to His will.

This truth continues to be born out in the national history of Israel and in the heart of every believer as people strive to follow God, fail, and are ultimately carried along by His righteousness rather than our own.

V.14 - The summation of Solomon's efforts though they are recounted in greater detail in this chapter.

V.15-22 Further detail regarding construction

The inner sanctuary is also called the Most Holy Place or the Holy of Holies. This was a perfectly proportional cube containing the ark of the covenant and its contents along with two giant figures representing angelic beings.

This place was off-limits with very limited exceptions. It is here that we must note the inaccessibility to God represented in the Temple by the Most Holy place.

The High-Priest in Israel could only enter once a year as dictated by the law in order to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the people,

and only after he had already offered a sacrifice for his own sins and the sins of his family. (Lev 16:2)

Why the exclusion? Not because God didn't want to be close to His creation but because if anybody who is sin enters God's presence they will die. In this way we see that God was communicating that for one to come to Him there must be atonement, the shedding of blood, the forgiveness of sins.

We even see that gold chains are placed in front of the entrance to the inner sanctuary - the message should be clear, "no entry." While these golden chains sure look good they serve to bar entry, to communicate man's separation from God.

We also see that gold is used everywhere. This is a reminder of God's glory and a reminder of our poverty. To you and I gold is precious but to God, it is part of His creation. He is not moved to awe by gold as we are.

We also know that no amount of gold dedicated to God or poured on the floor will buy holiness!

V.23-28 Historic symbolism among the Temple decorations

What is a cherubim? Essentially these are angelic beings. They are not ever represented in the Bible as little babies in diapers with harps.

Note that the ark itself was marked by two cherubs facing each other on the mercy seat, or the top of the ark.

These two large cherubim, within the inner sanctuary, then appear to be a magnified version of that.

But, one must ask the next logical, serious question. Why is the Temple marked by Cherubim, palm trees, open flowers, gourds/pomegranates. Also we see marvelous decoration in cedar, cypress, and olive wood. What does this represent or call to mind? What is the significance?

I propose that part of the symbolism here is tied up in a memorial to the historic Garden of Eden, the first place God dwelt among His people.

That garden may be represented by all of the rich symbolism of the wood, and the flowers, and the gourds, and pomegranates.

Then we come to the cherubim. Remember in Genesis 3:

[Gen 3:24 KJV] 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

So now the worshippers have a reminder of that history, really a reminder of failure, and another reminder of that which stands between God's holiness and man's failure.

Walls and Doors -- to the inner sanctuary, doors to the Temple entrance. Doors bar the way, but also mark an entrance.

[Jhn 10:9 NKJV] 9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

V.37-38 The foundation was laid and then the work began - all of the work, the symbolism, the communication that happened in the interim was important.

It took seven years to build Solomon's Temple - which ultimately fell. Meanwhile, God has been building a holy temple for Himself for the past two millennia. And it will be glorious to behold.

It takes time to build upon the foundation individually and corporately and God is building something that cannot be torn down.

What's the point? Patience loved one. Let Jesus have His perfect work individually and corporately.

[1Co 3:9-17 NKJV] 9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, [you are] God's building. 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation [with] gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's

work which he has built on [it] endures, he will receive a reward.

15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself

will be saved, yet so as through fire. 16 Do you not know that you

are the temple of God and [that] the Spirit of God dwells in you?

17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For

the temple of God is holy, which [temple] you are.