

1 Kings 7

(Includes information also found in 2 Chronicles 3, 4 & 5)

Building and working.

It is a time of peace and prosperity in Israel.

Since Israel is at peace they can turn their attention toward building.

V.1 - Solomon built a palace for himself.

Solomon didn't live in his Dad's house. David had a house. Solomon would have certainly inherited it, but he moved on to bigger and better things.

After spending seven years to build the Temple in Jerusalem we now see Solomon committing to 13 years of construction on his own house.

Such a magnificent house it was! It was more of a statement of well-being and power than a necessary place to lay his head.

The houses of political leaders were seen as necessary status symbols communicating their grandeur among the nations.

We can take this passage a couple of different ways.

The first of which is with a critical eye since we know how Solomon ends up.

From this perspective we compare the time it took to build the Temple, seven years, with the amount of time that it took to build Solomon's house, thirteen years, and we get uncomfortable with that.

We ask, "Why would somebody spend twice as much time building up their own place for their own personal interests as they did building up the things that relate to God almighty and the kingdom?"

In this our hearts convict, do they not?

We very often prefer building up those things that we desire here on the earth - our houses, careers, even hobbies. We do the unseemly yet common mental equation and come away considering that the building up of the Kingdom of God to be laborious, or less deserving of our time, resources and attention?

It is no secret that many Christians struggle to make time for prayer, study of the word, and fellowship while building up all of the other things in our lives.

Solomon is no different.

And yet - there is another way of looking at this.

Perhaps the reason why it only took seven years to build the Temple compared to 13 for Solomon's house was because of all of the preparation, dedication, and commitment to building the Temple.

BUT - that doesn't answer the challenge - is that it? Is seven years all that the Temple gets? After that we move on and build

other things? After we have sanctified the Temple then we start working on ourselves?

Sadly, that is exactly how many view being part of the Temple that God is building for Himself - the church.

This glorious church that Jesus has established is sometimes viewed as either incidental to our lives, or as a means to improve our lives.

Many view the faith as simply a self-help initiative and when they find that to be untrue they abandon the work altogether.

Nevertheless, Solomon tells us what his massive building projects amounted to in his own life:

[Ecc 2:4-11 NKJV] 4 I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. 5 I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all [kinds] of fruit trees in them. 6 I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. 7 I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of

herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. 8 I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, [and] musical instruments of all kinds. 9 So I became great and excelled more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me. 10 Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor. 11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all [was] vanity and grasping for the wind. [There was] no profit under the sun.

V.2-8 The Palace Complex known as The House of the Forest of Lebanon and its parts.

Called such because of the immense amount of cedar wood that possibly called to mind the country of Lebanon from which these cedars were delivered to Israel by Hiram, King of Tyre.

Lebanon was well known for their cedar trees.

Beautiful (and good smelling) cedar wood was found throughout the new buildings that Solomon constructed including the Temple.

David's own house was built of cedar once he settled in Jerusalem as well (2 Sam 7:2) but what Solomon was building far surpassed that.

V.6 - Hall of Pillars - this was a grandiose building, boasting of wealth, power and technological advancement. Remember the Temple also had pillars.

[Rev 3:12 NKJV] 12 "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And [I will write on him] My new name.

V.7 - Hall of Justice - this was to be a place of justice; a place where people could have their issues addressed by the King directly and he could dispense his wisdom and right judgments.

V.8 - Living quarters for Solomon and his wife/wives - there was some distance between husband and wife. Adding more wives and concubines to this situation only further damages this relationship.

We also see that these marriages were designed just like the house itself with an ulterior purpose - that being to communicate status and power and not necessarily love and affection.

This would facilitate Solomon's downfall.

V.9-12 Construction methods mirroring the Temple construction.

Solomon's house resembled God's house in some ways.

It is said that imitation is the highest form of flattery.

Even as Solomon sought to imitate the look and construction methods of the Temple we know for sure that God is making us resemble Jesus by the Spirit as He builds up His holy Temple - which Temple you are!

[1Co 15:49 NKJV] 49 And as we have borne the image of the [man] of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly [Man].

V.13-22 Hiram's craftsmanship and work for the Temple.

The author re-visits the making of the items and furnishings associated with the Temple after describing Solomon's house.

The Temple was more than just empty rooms - the Temple was important because of what went on there and the message it communicated to the people about who God was.

Many other symbolic instruments were made to assist in the worship of the people at the Temple.

Solomon brought the best craftsman in the region from Tyre to oversee the metalwork for the Temple, a man named Hiram, not to be confused with the King of Tyre, Hiram.

Two of the first items we see are two great, ornate, and intricate bronze pillars and their capitals. Note the inclusion of chains -

perhaps merely ornamental but I can't help but think about their association with bondage and captivity.

So enormous and exceptional were these pillars that they were given names.

Jakin, meaning "He established"; and Boaz, meaning "in Him is strength."

V.23-40a The Sea, and the basins for ceremonial washing and cleaning of the altar (shovels/ash buckets)

The great bronze sea calls to my mind the sea that the Israelites passed through during their delivery from slavery in Egypt.

It was essentially a great above ground pool set on top of 12 oxen, used for ceremonial cleansings along with the other basins positioned around the Temple.

The message = clean up!

We see many of these things decorated with oxen and lions - common figurative symbols used throughout the Scriptures.

Jesus is the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah.” (Rev 5:5)

These animal figures also occur prominently in Ezekiel and Revelation.

Early christian symbolism relates each gospel to an associated figure (Lion, Man, Eagle, Ox) - sometimes called a Tetramorph.

Varying interpretations associate these figures differently. One views Matthew as presenting Christ the Man. Another view suggests Matthew presents Christ as the Lion. Another view suggests that Luke presents Christ as the Man. While still another suggests that Luke presents Christ as the Ox, or servant.

While there are varied views on how this symbolism is communicated, we are certain of the manifold nature of Christ towards His creation.

Even when we aren't entirely sure of the details surrounding this symbolism in ancient times we know that it was intentionally directed by God to point to the coming Christ and the various roles He fulfills according to Scripture.

Interestingly, Jesus himself assumes the characteristics of an ox when he says: [Mat 11:29 NKJV] 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

V.40b-45 Recap of all that Hiram was responsible for designing and building.

V.46-47 Such immense wealth was brought into the kingdom that it was immeasurable!

Where did it all come from?

[1Ch 18:7-11 NLT] 7 David brought the gold shields of Hadadezer's officers to Jerusalem, 8 along with a large amount of bronze from Hadadezer's towns of Tebah and Cun. Later Solomon melted the bronze and molded it into the great bronze

basin called the Sea, the pillars, and the various bronze articles used at the Temple. 9 When King Toi of Hamath heard that David had destroyed the entire army of King Hadadezer of Zobah, 10 he sent his son Joram to congratulate King David for his successful campaign. Hadadezer and Toi had been enemies and were often at war. Joram presented David with many gifts of gold, silver, and bronze. 11 King David dedicated all these gifts to the LORD, along with the silver and gold he had taken from the other nations--from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Amalek.

David had turned his heart towards preparing for the Temple that he couldn't build. And in some ways that is our heart too! We labor for a Temple that we cannot build - only God can build and it is glorious to prepare and labor for that!

AND, I pray that we are mindful of preparing for the next generation of laborers as well - the ones who will continue to prepare and work after we depart to be with the Lord.

V.48-50 The gold furnishings for the Temple - more precious metals were also used to build the instruments used for worship in the Temple.

Solomon was given the plan from his Father.

[1Ch 28:14-19 NLT] 14 David gave instructions regarding how much gold and silver should be used to make the items needed for service. 15 He told Solomon the amount of gold needed for the gold lampstands and lamps, and the amount of silver for the silver lampstands and lamps, depending on how each would be used. 16 He designated the amount of gold for the table on which the Bread of the Presence would be placed and the amount of silver for other tables. 17 David also designated the amount of gold for the solid gold meat hooks used to handle the sacrificial meat and for the basins, pitchers, and dishes, as well as the amount of silver for every dish. 18 He designated the amount of refined gold for the altar of incense. Finally, he gave him a plan for the LORD's "chariot"--the gold cherubim whose wings were stretched out over the Ark of the LORD's Covenant. 19 "Every part of this plan," David told Solomon, "was given to me in writing from the hand of the LORD."

You are more precious than all of that! You are God's treasure, of immeasurable worth in God's Temple.

[Luk 12:6-7 NKJV] 6 "Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

V.51 - Bringing in all of the gifts that David dedicated for the Temple

Where did all of this come from? From the King, and from the people. They all gave collectively to see this work accomplished.

And they did it in a way that was joyful and glorious to them, not begrudgingly.

[1Ch 29:1-16 NLT] 1 Then King David turned to the entire assembly and said, "My son Solomon, whom God has clearly chosen as the next king of Israel, is still young and inexperienced. The work ahead of him is enormous, for the Temple he will build is not for mere mortals--it is for the LORD God himself! 2 Using every resource at my command, I have gathered as much as I could for building the Temple of my God. Now there is enough

gold, silver, bronze, iron, and wood, as well as great quantities of onyx, other precious stones, costly jewels, and all kinds of fine stone and marble. 3 "And now, because of my devotion to the Temple of my God, I am giving all of my own private treasures of gold and silver to help in the construction. This is in addition to the building materials I have already collected for his holy Temple. 4 I am donating more than 112 tons of gold from Ophir and 262 tons of refined silver to be used for overlaying the walls of the buildings 5 and for the other gold and silver work to be done by the craftsmen. Now then, who will follow my example and give offerings to the LORD today?" 6 Then the family leaders, the leaders of the tribes of Israel, the generals and captains of the army, and the king's administrative officers all gave willingly. 7 For the construction of the Temple of God, they gave about 188 tons of gold, 10,000 gold coins, 375 tons of silver, 675 tons of bronze, and 3,750 tons of iron. 8 They also contributed numerous precious stones, which were deposited in the treasury of the house of the LORD under the care of Jehiel, a descendant of Gershon. 9 The people rejoiced over the offerings, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD, and King David was filled with joy. 10 Then David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly: "O LORD, the God of our

ancestor Israel, may you be praised forever and ever! 11 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, O LORD, and this is your kingdom. We adore you as the one who is over all things.

Now, to bring this into our day, God is building His own Temple and is pouring His riches out on us. We are the beneficiaries of His great grace and blessings.

All of these extravagant, luxurious accommodations, buildings, materials, pre-figured the true riches that we partake of through Christ; namely His grace and an eternal hope.

[Eph 1:7 NKJV] 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace

As laborers in God's kingdom let us conclude by considering David's exhortation as a Father to a son faced with a monumental task:

[1Ch 28:20 NLT] 20 Then David continued, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. He will see to it that all the work related to the Temple of the LORD is finished correctly.