

Bi235 Old Testament 2

Lesson Bi235-24 Solomon Builds the Temple

Solomon was a busy builder—the greatest builder in Israel until Herod the Great about 40 B.C. At Megiddo he fortified the wall, built palaces, and fashioned an underground water system. One of his royal cities was Hazor, located northwest of the Sea of Galilee. This city guarded a main road from the seacoast to Damascus. Another strategic city guarded the road from the seacoast to Jerusalem. This was Gezer, which Solomon also fortified.

His greatest building project was the temple in Jerusalem. Many historians think the Temple of Solomon should be included in the list of wonders of the ancient world. His father King David had gathered materials for the building of the temple. David also chose much of the design and the location. It would stand on one of the hills of Jerusalem, namely, Mount Moriah.

Early in David's reign he conquered Jerusalem and made it the capital of the nation of Israel. He had the Ark of the Covenant brought to Jerusalem and placed in a tent on Mount Zion. He wanted to build a permanent building to house the ark. "I had it in my heart," David said, "to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, for the footstool of our God, and I made plans to build it. But God said to me, 'You are not to build a house for my Name, because you are a warrior and have shed blood'" (1Chron 28:2-3).

Before Solomon began building, David and Israel's leaders had amassed enormous stockpiles of materials for the temple. They had gold, silver, bronze, iron, cedar wood, onyx, turquoise, other precious stones, fine construction stone, and marble. The Book of First Chronicles reports 330 metric tons (300 tons) of gold was stockpiled. In addition, over 660 metric tons (600 tons) each of silver and bronze, and thousands of tons of iron were ready.

Solomon began to build. He used hired craftsmen and forced laborers—tens of thousands of each. From Hiram, king of Tyre, he requested skilled workers and timber. The structure itself was about 28 meters long and 9 meters wide (90 by 30 feet). The walls inside were paneled with wood and overlaid with gold. Designs of palm trees and cherubim were engraved in the gold-covered walls and ceilings. At the west end was an enclosed room called the Holy of Holies. It was 9 meters long, 9 meters wide, and 9 meters high—all walls and ceiling covered in gold. This is where the Ark of the Covenant was kept.

Building went on for seven years. Finally, the building and all the furniture and objects used in worship were complete. King Solomon summoned the elders of the tribes to Jerusalem. When they arrived, he ordered the Levites to bring the ark from Mount Zion into the new temple. Priests offered sacrifices, and musicians played cymbals, harps, lyres, and trumpets in unison to give praise and thanks to Yahweh. Singers sang, "Yahweh is good; his love endures forever" (2Chron 5:13).

Then something unheard of happened: the temple was suddenly filled with the cloud of God's presence. The priests could not perform their service any longer, for the glory of Yahweh filled the Temple of God.

Then Solomon blessed everyone standing there and said, "The LORD has kept the promise he made. I have succeeded David my father and now I sit on the throne of Israel, just as Yahweh promised, and I have built the temple for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel. There I have

placed the ark, in which is the covenant of Yahweh that he made with the people of Israel” (2Chron 6:10-11).

Solomon was standing on a platform outside the temple. He knelt down, spread his hands toward heaven, and prayed a prayer of dedication. The prayer is long, but this part is memorable: “Will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! Yet give attention to your servant’s prayer and his plea for mercy, Yahweh my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, ‘My Name shall be there,’ so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive” (1Kings 8:27-30).

After his prayer, Solomon charged the people in front of him, “May your hearts be fully committed to Yahweh our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands.” Then the king and priests sacrificed thousands of cattle, sheep, and goats, as they dedicated the Temple of the LORD. For 14 days the celebration of dedication went on. Finally, Solomon sent the people home. They were joyful and glad for all the good things the LORD had done for his servant David and his people Israel.

Sometime later, Yahweh appeared to Solomon in a dream. Yahweh said, “I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there. As for you, if you walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart and uprightness, I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father. But if you or your descendants turn away from me, then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. 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” (1Kings 9:3-7, 2Chron 7:14).

This story is **important** because it shows us that Solomon was wise in building a permanent home for the ark and the worship of the LORD. He finished what his father David had begun.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that God continued to work in Solomon’s life, especially in the first half of his reign and during the building of the temple. Honoring God and obeying God were important parts of Solomon’s greatness.

Let’s **review** this lesson—

1. What were some of Solomon’s building projects, besides the Temple? [Pause]
A. If you said, “Fortified cities, palaces, and water systems,” you are right.
2. Why was the Temple of Solomon one of the wonders of the ancient world? [Pause]
A. If you answered, “The size and grandeur of the temple had never been seen in Israel before,” you answered correctly.
3. How do we know Yahweh was pleased with the temple that Solomon built? [Pause]
A. If you said, “His presence filled the temple like a cloud at the dedication, and he told Solomon in a dream and that his eyes and his heart would always be there,” you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to it as many times as you need to be able to tell the story in your own words. You may spend 45 minutes in learning the story. You may need to have someone check that you are telling the story correctly. Talk with your mentor or some fellow church leaders. Consider whether God is asking you to build a place for believers to gather. Pray together about hearing God's voice and seeing his vision for the future of his Body in your place.

Memorize God's promise to Israel through Solomon: "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" (Second Chronicles 7:14).