

1 Kings 6

Written by K B Napier
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The building of the Temple is an indication of Solomon's character. While other kings amassed wealth for themselves, Solomon used it for God, not keeping anything back nor cutting corners. The incredibly detailed Temple plans were interpreted by architects and executed by builders, the finished article being skillfully crafted with artwork, and the whole building covered in solid gold plates. It was his lack of personal desires that led God to give Solomon greater wealth than any other king had ever known. This should be a good lesson for all today who would want anything from this world!

Everything belongs to God, Who graciously allows us to use His resources. When we try to accrue for ourselves God does not bestow gifts upon us. It is only when we view everything in this world as God's possessions that He gives us what we need, and more. By giving enormous amounts of gold back to God, God gave Solomon even greater amounts for himself. Solomon did not just use the gold on the Temple because he knew God would thereby give him more... he did it because he loved God and wanted to give Him only the very best, at whatever cost.

Today's Christians are not like this. They gather wealth for themselves. They even gather well-paying pensions, even though some are in grave need. They gather expensive homes, with no thought for what God wants of them. They have all manner of goods for themselves... all the antithesis of how Solomon lived. There are lessons for us in this chapter. I pray we apply them to our hearts.

Verse 1

1.

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

Some doubters and unbelievers try to undermine scripture by pointing to alleged discrepancies or 'errors'. All Christians must remember the rule: What God says is 100% true, and what men say can often be 100% wrong. The details provide ample proof that what the bible says is accurate – note the precise reference to dates... 480 years after the Hebrews left Egypt (the Exodus), and into Solomon's fourth year as king, in the month of Zif, he began work on building the first Temple to God.

1 Kings 6

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These references are too accurate to be invented! *Zif* or *Ziv* ('brightness') is the second month in the Hebrew calendar, equivalent to our April-May (Spring). Thus, *Ziv* is a figurative word for the month of flowers, mainly speaking of their splendour, and to the new moon of May. (It seems that *Zif* was from the Canaanite system). The word links to

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, meaning to rebuild or repair, and new life, which seems apt. In the time of David, Spring was the time to go to war, but in Solomon's time there was no war, only a fresh time for growth of crops, flowers... and new projects for the Lord.

Verses 2-4

1.

And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.

2.

And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house.

3.

And for the house he made windows of narrow lights.

God gave very detailed instructions for the building of the movable Temple made of tents. Now, he gives more details for the building of His permanent abode.... size, contents, materials, etc., requiring the help of architects, carpenters, masons, labourers, and artist-craftsmen.

This First Temple was about quarter the size of the Second Temple: 60 cubits long, 20 cubits wide and 30 cubits high overall. The measure is from finger tips to elbow. But, of course, such a length varies with every person! The average was about 17.5 inches. Egyptians saw it as slightly longer – 17.6 inches, though 18 inches was 'common'! Even the Hebrew measure could be either long or short – the 'long' was 20.4 inches, the Babylonian was 19.8 inches and the

1 Kings 6

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'long Egyptian measure was 20.6 inches. However, it is known that the 'long' measure of a cubit was used in large projects (such as the Temple).

The angelic reference to a "cubit plus a handbreadth" (Ezekiel 43:13) tells us how the 'long' cubit was measured. (For this reason it is suspected that Noah's Ark was larger than most books suggest). The place here named "the oracle" was the Holy of Holies containing the Ark.

Verses 5-7

1.

And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle: and he made chambers round about:

2.

The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad: for without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house.

3.

And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

When the walls of the main temple were built, smaller chambers or rooms were added outside them, and against the oracle itself. The farthest room was five cubits wide. The middle room was slightly larger, and the third one was larger again. The secret worship room had recesses built into the outer walls, to hold wooden beams, to avoid fixing them to the place where God spoke to the high priests. The stones of the secret room containing the Ark were all dressed (cut to size and finished) before they arrived on site, so that God's house was not disturbed by noise.

Verses 8-10

1.

1 Kings 6

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The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third.

2.

So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar.

3.

And then he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar.

There was no direct access to the chambers on the side of the Temple. The middle chamber was reached by a spiral staircase starting outside the right hand side of the building. The third chamber was reached through the middle chamber.

The stonework of the Temple was finally completed. Then, the stone was covered with cedar planks pinned to cedar beams. The chambers along both sides were five cubits high (about 7ft-8ft) and were fixed to the stonework by cedar beams. From start to finish it took seven years to build the Temple. The cost was phenomenal, especially when we consider the decorations in the Temple (gold, silver, jewels, etc).

(NOTES: The Temple was built upon the Temple Mount [Mount Zion] around 1000 years BC – thus destroying the claims of Muslims to the site; because of this sure fact, Muslims refuse to allow excavations on the Mount; they fear that Jewish ownership of the Mount would be found, even though such ownership is fixed in history. It was burnt to the ground 470 years and six months after it was built, though some rabbinical sources add another 165 years to that figure.

The floor of the Holy of Holies, the Kodesh Hakodashim, was raised, thus raising the height of the roof over it. There were two cherubim statues guarding the Ark, their wings spanning 10 cubits, and their bodies reaching ten cubits high – roughly 15 or more feet. There is much more to say about this Temple, but not included in this study).

Verses 11-14

1 Kings 6

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1.

And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying,

2.

Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father:

3.

And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

4.

So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

The “word” (*dabar*) of Jehovah came to Solomon. That is, God’s instructions. We are not told by what means they were given, only that Solomon was told what to do. The instructions came to him during the seven year period of construction. God told him that if he kept His laws, decisions made by Him, and all His commandments as a way of life, then God would be with him and make good all the promises He made to David. Obviously, this encouragement also implies a warning, that if Solomon strayed from this strict path, God would judge him AND the people.

We therefore see that a whole nation can be judged because of the beliefs and actions of a ruler. God said He would not forsake the people and would be in their midst, IF Solomon remained holy and faithful to Him. Knowing this, Solomon finalised the Temple. From this we can assume that He accepted the conditions placed on him by God.

Christians today must realise that God places conditions upon us, too... the very same conditions put on Solomon. We are not exempt, and many of the historical narratives apply to us in our day, when it comes to behaviour and beliefs.

1 Kings 6

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Verses 15-18

1.

And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.

2.

And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built them for it within, even for the oracle, even for the most holy place.

3.

And the house, that is, the temple before it, was forty cubits long.

4.

And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen.

God gave all the details of the temple to Solomon, and a major detail was that none of the huge stones used in the construction should be seen. Thus, the ceilings and walls were all covered with cedar boards, and the floors were covered with boards of fir, much as medieval dignitaries covered their walls and floors with wood panels.

Boards were also built twenty cubits from the main building. The panels were covered in holy decoration – knops (ball-shaped carvings) and flowers in full bloom.

Verses 19&20

1.

And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

1 Kings 6

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2.

And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar.

All parts of the Temple were holy, but one place was holier – the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest could enter. This was the ‘oracle’ or speaking-place, where God spoke directly to the priest, who then later passed-on the words to the people. It was a silent place, separated from the outside by gold-plated doors, and with the presence of the Ark, guarded by the cherubim, must have put the priest in grave awe. The whole room was covered in gold, but the altar was made of cedar.

Verses 21&22

1.

So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold.

2.

And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold.

In this summary of previous information, we are told that Solomon covered the entire inner Temple with plates of gold, separating the Holy of Holies from the outer chamber with solid gold chains. The cedar altar was also covered in gold.

Verses 23-28

1.

And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high.

1 Kings 6

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2.

And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits.

3.

And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size.

4.

The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub.

5.

And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house.

6.

And he overlaid the cherubims with gold.

The two cherubim were carved in cedar and then covered in gold. Each figure was about twenty feet tall, both wings being the same width as the height, the wing tips touching the wall.

Verses 29-32

1.

And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without.

2.

And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without.

1 Kings 6

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3.

And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree: the lintel and side posts were a fifth part of the wall.

4.

The two doors also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees.

All the walls inside and outside the Temple were carved, with figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. The floor of the temple, both inside and the external parts, was covered in gold. The doors to the Holy of Holies were made of olive wood, with wide lintels and posts. The doors also were covered in the same carvings, and then with gold.

Verses 33-35

1.

So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall.

2.

And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding.

3.

And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work.

The outer pillars were made of olive wood, and the outer doors were made of fir tree. The door was divided into four sections, each folding back rather than opening on a hinge. These were

1 Kings 6

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also carved like the doors to the Holy of Holies, and covered in solid gold.

Verses 36-38

1.

[And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.](#)

2.

In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Zif:

3.

And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

The courtyard of the Temple had three rows of dressed stones and a row of cedar pillars. The whole construction period was seven years, finishing in the month of Bul, the eighth month (our October-November).

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