

1 Kings 6

Introduction

1. In chapter 5 last week, we learned about Solomon's preparations to build the temple
 - a. His father David had provided the plans, and stockpiled gold and silver to be used in the construction
 - b. To begin the project, Solomon needed the chief building supplies, wood and stone, so he contracted with Hiram, the King of Tyre, who was well known for his building projects, one of which was David's own palace
 - c. Solomon also needed a massive work force, so he put together a force of over 200,000 men
 - d. Once all of that was in place, he began what would ultimately take 7 years to complete and this brings us to chapter 6
2. Outline:
 - a. The CONSTRUCTION of the temple ushered in a new era in Israel's history
 - b. The DESIGN of the temple reflected the splendor and majesty of God
 - c. The PURPOSE for the temple was useless without obedience

A. The CONSTRUCTION of the temple ushered in a new era in Israel's history (READ 6:1)

9/11 symbolizes not just the terrorist attack on the twin towers, but a new era in the war against terrorism; rather than simply defending ourselves against attack, we went on the offensive to places like Iraq and Afghanistan

1. The author's citation of the date when Solomon began to build the temple is more than just a chronological note; he is indicating the start of a new era in Israel's history:
 - a. There are other examples of this in the OT:
 - 1) Genesis 7:11 and 8:13 marked a new era in human history with the Flood (READ)
 - 2) Exodus 12:40-41 marked a new era in Israel history with the release from bondage and the march toward the Promise Land (READ)
 - 3) Exodus 19:1 marked a new area in Israel's religious life with the giving of the Law (READ)
 - 4) Exodus 40:17 marked a new area of worship with the construction of the tabernacle (READ)
 - 5) Deuteronomy 1:3 marked another new era for Israel; after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, Moses reminded them of the Law as they were on the cusp of entering the Promise Land
 - b. According to 1 Kings 3:2, at this time most of Israel was worshipping God at various high places throughout Israel:
 - 1) There was no central place of worship because **"there was no temple"**
 - 2) The closest thing they had to a central location was the tabernacle which was at Gibeon about 6 miles northwest of Jerusalem (where Solomon sacrificed)
 - 3) It wasn't even a permanent structure; it was a portable tent originally used by Israel during their 40 years in the wilderness
 - 4) At this time, it didn't even house the Ark of the Covenant; that was in a tent just outside the city walls of Jerusalem (David moved it there when he planned to build the temple)

- c. However, that was all about to change:
 - 1) During the Exodus, God told Israel that a time would come when He would choose a specific place within the borders of Israel where His name would dwell and they would worship Him there (READ Deuteronomy 12:10-14):
 - 2) He repeated this promise to David (READ 2 Samuel 7:8-13)
 - 3) There are some important details in these two passages:
 - a) First and foremost, God would choose the time and place
 - b) Second, it would happen after He had given rest to Israel from their enemies (something finally secured by David)
 - c) Third, it would be Solomon whom God would raise up to build His house
 - d) Finally, God would no longer tolerate Israel worshipping at various high places throughout the kingdom; they would be required to bring their holy offerings to the temple in Jerusalem

- d. So, 480 years after Israel left Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign, in the month of Ziv, this new era began

- 2. Takeaway:
 - a. One takeaway is that God certainly isn’t in a hurry with His redemptive plan:
 - 1) To paraphrase one commentator, Ralph Davis, the Lord is a persevering God who slowly and steadily accomplishes His redemptive work
 - 2) We see this throughout God’s redemptive history:
 - a) It was approximately 500 years from God’s promises to Abraham to the Exodus
 - b) It was almost another 500 years from the Exodus to the building of the Temple
 - c) It was then approximately 1000 years before the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus
 - d) It’s now been almost 2000 years and counting to the next major milestone—the return of Jesus and the beginning of another new era, the 1000-year earthly reign of Jesus Christ
 - e) When people in Peter’s day were complaining about how long it was taking Jesus to come back—after just a few decades!!!—his response was, **“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance”** (2 Peter 3:9)

 - b. Another takeaway from just this first verse in chapter 6 is that the LORD keeps His promises:
 - 1) Before Joshua died he said to Israel, **“Now behold, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed.”** (Joshua 23:14)
 - 2) Solomon said something similar when he dedicated the temple (1 Kings 8:56): **“Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised; not one word has failed of all His good promise, which He promised through Moses His servant.”**
 - 3) God’s faithfulness in keeping his promises wasn’t just important for Israel; it’s just as important for us because it’s the foundation of our hope:
 - a) Hebrews 10:23, **“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;”**

- b) 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24: **“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.”**
- c) 1 John 2:25: **“This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.”**

B. The DESIGN of the temple reflected the splendor and majesty of God (6:2-10, 15-36)

1. Chapters 6 and 7 consist mainly of a long list of extensive details regarding the design and contents of the temple, as well as Solomon’s palace:
2. If you’re like me, you might be tempted to simply skim or even skip over the long list of details because it’s kind of like reading the genealogies of Numbers!
3. However, because God saw fit to include them in the Bible there must be a purpose for them; so, we’re going to read them and then talk about why God might have included these details:
 - a. 6:2-10 describe the temple building itself (READ)
 - b. 6:15-30 describe the inside, including both the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies (READ)
 - c. 6:31-36 describe the entrances to the temple and the Holy of Holies (READ)
 - d. 7:1-12 describe Solomon’s palace (next week)
 - e. 7:13-51 describe all the internal and external furnishings for the temple (next week)
4. Why are these details important?
 - a. The first thing that comes to mind is that most of the Jews returning from exile likely had never seen the temple:
 - 1) Remember, the author wrote this account at least 70 years, probably more, after the temple had been destroyed and Israel had been in captivity in Babylon all of that time
 - 2) As we learned in our introduction, part of his purpose in writing 1st and 2nd Kings was to serve as a warning to the Jews who were returning to Jerusalem after the captivity
 - 3) What better way to remind them of the depths to which Israel had fallen than to be given a description of such a magnificent temple that no longer existed?
 - b. A second thing that comes to mind is that these details are important because the temple was designed to reflect the splendor and majesty of God:
 - 1) The nations around Israel were filled with temples dedicated to pagan gods, and many were quite impressive
 - 2) In terms of size, some were bigger than Solomon’s temple, but there was nothing that compared in terms of pure beauty and splendor:
 - a) For instance, the Luxor Temple in Egypt was one of the largest in terms of size with its ten different sections, 200-foot-wide entrance, and dozens of towering sphinx and statues
 - b) The Temple of Melqart in Tyre (where Hiram was from) was also one of the most impressive; it took up almost an entire island and was known for its two altars, one made of gold and the other of green emerald that glowed at night due to the candle placed inside it
 - c) But, what made Solomon’s temple one of the wonders of the ancient near east was its unmatched beauty and splendor
 - 3) One of the things that made the temple so awe inspiring was that practically everything inside it was covered in gold:

- a) Gold is mentioned 16 times in chapters 6 & 7
- b) Walls, ceilings, door posts and doors, and even the floor were covered in gold
- c) The two giant cherubim in the Holy of Holies were covered with gold
- d) The furnishings were also gold: the altar, candlestands and tables
- e) Even the utensils were made of gold and silver
- f) According to 1 Chronicles 22:14, King David left Solomon 100,000 talents (3000 tons or 6,000,000 pounds) of gold and 1,000,000 talents (30,000 tons or 60,000,000 pounds) of silver to use in the construction of the temple
- g) At today's prices, that would be almost \$180 BILLION (with a B) worth of gold and silver
- h) It's not clear whether Solomon used all this gold in the temple, but according to 2 Chronicles 3:8, he used 600 talents of gold (almost \$10 BILLION) on just the walls, ceiling, and floor of the Holy of Holies which was the smaller of the two interior rooms, and this doesn't include the giant cherubim which likely could have easily doubled the amount of gold

Solomon's Temple 3d Video

5. Takeaway:
- a. From our Christian mindset today we might wonder how God could endorse such extravagance, especially since WE are the temple of God and the building is just a building
 - b. But in the ANE, temples symbolized a nation's god or gods and their presence among the nation
 - c. Solomon's temple served that same purpose; it was not only God's house among His people, but the extravagance and splendor of the temple was commensurate with His glory
 - d. If I can paraphrase scholar Dale Davis again, in a world filled with lavish temples built by kings to honor pagan gods, why should God's house look like a discount store or something built with a government loan?

C. The PURPOSE for the temple was worthless without obedience (6:11-14)

- 1. You might have noticed that I skipped over verses 11-14; this is because I wanted to save them for last because I believe they are the most important verses in this passage
- 2. We can get caught up in the magnificence of the temple and all the gold and silver, and even wonder what it must have been like to walk through its doors
- 3. But, there's an important—but profoundly simple—lesson God reminded Solomon of during the building of the temple
- 4. At some point, it doesn't say when, the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time (READ 6:11-14):
 - a. The crux of what God said to Solomon is this: Israel could only expect to enjoy all that the temple symbolized if Solomon and Israel continued to walk in obedience and remain faithful to Him
 - b. If they would do that, God would dwell among His people and never forsake them
 - c. In other words, the temple would be worthless without obedience
 - d. Unfortunately, this is a lesson Israel, even to this day, has not taken to heart
- 5. Takeaway: the same principle is true today

- a. Many want religion without obedience and faithfulness to God; but that kind of “faith” is useless
- b. We even have a form of this in the Church today, where many who profess to know Jesus Christ don’t walk in obedience to His Word and His commandments
- c. Rather than merely being in the world, they continue to be of the world and have no interest in being transformed
- d. The Bible warns us about this:
 - 1) Listen to what Jesus said (READ John 14:15-24)
 - 2) The Apostle John took this to heart and repeated it in his letters (READ 1 John 2:1-6 & 3 John 1:11)
- e. The test of genuine faith is obedience to Jesus Christ and His Word
- f. Without that, calling oneself a Christian, reading the Bible, showing up at Church, even having some emotional experience during praise and worship is all useless