

1 Kings 5

Introduction

1. During the Exodus God promised a day when He would choose a place to put His name where all Israel would come and worship Him (READ Deuteronomy 12:1-14):
 - a. During the Exodus, God gave the Israelites instructions on what to do with the religious centers of the nations they conquered when entering the land:
 - 1) They were to **“utterly destroy”** all of the religious high places by tearing down their altars, smashing their sacred pillars, burning the Asherim, cutting down their engraved images, and **“obliterate[ing]”** the names of their God’s from the land
 - 2) They were not to worship God in the same manner in which these nations worshipped their gods
 - 3) They were also not to worship God at those high places
 - 4) Finally, they were not to worship God by each man doing what was right in his own eyes
 - b. Instead, God would choose a place for them to worship Him:
 - 1) He would choose a single location in one of the tribes of Israel where His name would dwell
 - 2) He would do this once they were living in the land and God had given them rest from their enemies
 - 3) It would be in this place where they were to **“seek the LORD”** and bring all their tithes and offerings—burnt offerings, sacrifices, contributions of their hands, votive offerings, freewill offerings, and the first born of their herds and flocks
 - 4) They would come there to **“eat before the LORD and rejoice in all [their] undertakings in which the LORD [their] God has blessed [them]”**
2. Today we’re in chapter 5 of 1st Kings and we’re going to see three things:
 - a. The LORD’s promise fulfilled
 - b. The LORD’s kingdom foreshadowed
 - c. The LORD’s wisdom manifest

A. The LORD’s promise fulfilled (5:1-5)

1. Solomon recognized that the time to build God’s house was now, and that it would be the fulfillment of God’s promise (READ 1 Kings 5:1-5):
 - a. I want us to read the parallel passage in 2 Chronicles 2 which has more details, but I want you pay special attention to how closely Solomon’s words match those of the LORD from Deuteronomy 12 which we read above (READ 2 Chronicles 2:1-6):
 - 1) Twice Solomon refers to building a house **“for the name of the LORD”** and a **“house to dwell in”** (2-4a)
 - 2) Solomon said it would be dedicated to God for the purpose of burning incense before Him, continually setting out the showbread before Him, offering burnt offerings morning and evening, celebrating sabbaths and new moons and the appointed feasts of the LORD (4b)
 - 3) Solomon said that what he was going to build would be **“great, for greater is our God than all the gods”** (5)

- b. Now, go back to 1 Kings 5:3-5 (RE-READ):
 - 1) David was unable to build the LORD's house because he was busy fighting wars and securing Israel from its enemies
 - 2) However, God had now given rest to Solomon with **"rest on every side"** with no **"adversary nor misfortune"** (4)
 - c. The similarity between the LORD's words in Deuteronomy and Solomon's words here are not coincidental; Solomon fully understood that what he was about to do was a fulfillment of God's promise (RE-READ 5)—see also 2 Chronicles 6:11 (said after completion)
2. Now, let's talk about this man Hiram:
- a. Hiram was a gentile and the king of Tyre:
 - 1) Tyre was the largest and oldest Phoenician city and located on the Mediterranean Sea about 150 miles north of Jerusalem
 - 2) It was originally given to the tribe of Asher during the conquest, but they failed to conquer it, so it remained an independent pagan city
 - 3) King Hiram ruled Tyre for 34 years and was known for his extensive building projects; this was in part due to their access to cedar trees from Lebanon and the unmatched timbering skills of the Sidonians (6)
 - 4) He was also known for colonizing several Mediterranean islands like Cyprus and Sicily, and his large commercial maritime enterprises which were used to ship supplies for his projects
 - b. David probably instructed Solomon to hire Hiram to help with the temple:
 - 1) According to v. 1, Hiram and David were friends
 - 2) David had contracted with Hiram to build his palace, and their business relationship apparently grew into a close personal friendship
 - 3) According to 1 Chronicles 28 and 2 Chronicles 2:7), David provided Solomon with not only the architectural plans for the temple, and collected most of gold, silver, brass and dyes and fabric to make the furnishings for the temple, but provided Solomon with instructions regarding the temple
 - 4) I think it is reasonable to assume that part of these instructions included hiring Hiram
3. Takeaways:
- a. God fulfilled His promise to Israel—He chose a place for His name to dwell and where all Israel could come to worship Him
 - b. God fulfilled His promise to David—that his son, Solomon, would build His house

B. The LORD's kingdom foreshadowed (5:6-11)
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- 1. Solomon contracted with Hiram to help build the temple (READ 5:6-11)
 - a. Under the agreement, Solomon's and Hiram's workers would labor side-by-side building the temple (6)
 - b. Solomon would provide the bulk of the general laborers, all the wages and provisions for not only his workers but Hiram's, and provisions for Hiram's personal house
 - c. Hiram would provide the building materials like cedar and cypress and stone, experts and skilled craftsmen, and transporting the goods from Lebanon to Solomon

2. What I want to focus on in these verses, however, is the response by Hiram in verse 7:
 - a. We need to remember that Hiram is a gentile, and lives in a pagan country dominated by false gods:
 - 1) The Phoenicians had many gods including Baal, El, and Baalat, and Melqart who was the head of the large pantheon (temple) at Tyre; he was the king of all gods in Tyre
 - 2) Melqart means “king of the city” and he was referred to as Baal de Sor or “Lord of Tyre”
 - 3) There was a close connection between the kings of Tyre and Melqart, often with the two sometimes being thought of as one and the same
 - 4) In fact, the prophet Ezekiel rebuked the king of Tyre in his day for considering himself a god (Ezekiel 28:1-2)
 - b. Now, with that in mind, I want us to look again at Hiram’s response (RE-READ 5:7):
 - 1) Keep in mind that this is Hiram’s personal and private response, likely something he thought or said to himself; his letter back to Solomon doesn’t start until v. 8
 - a) He rejoices
 - b) He blesses the LORD, even using the LORD’s name, Yahweh
 - c) He even saw the LORD’s divine hand in making Solomon king
 - 2) His understanding of the LORD didn’t stop there (see 2 Chronicles 2:11-12):
 - a) In his letter back to Solomon he refers to the LORD as the maker of heaven and earth
 - b) He recognized Solomon becoming king as a sign of the LORD’s love for His people
 - 3) What does this tell us about Hiram?
 - a) He clearly had an understanding of who Yahweh was, and it likely came from his relationship with David
 - b) His language suggests he worshipped God
 - c) What isn’t clear is whether he worshipped the LORD along with the other Phoenician gods or if he had become a Jewish proselyte
3. Takeaway: What we see here is a foreshadowing of God’s kingdom:
 - a. The Bible repeatedly refers to Israel as God’s people, but His redemptive plan has always included gentiles
 - b. This is revealed in various places throughout Old Testament, but has been made even more evident in the Gospel (READ Ephesians 3:1-13)
 - c. What we have here in our passage is Jews and gentiles working together, side by side, to build the temple of God and this serves as a foreshadowing—a type—of what we can expect in God’s kingdom, not just in Jesus Christ’s earthly millennial kingdom but in God’s eternal kingdom

C. The LORD’s wisdom manifest (5:12-18)

1. So far, we’ve seen Solomon’s wisdom displayed in a wide range of ways:
 - a. We saw his wisdom in settling a civil dispute between two women (chapter 3)
 - b. We saw his wisdom in the administration of his government—the choosing of his chief advisors and the 13 governors to govern the different regions of Israel, and his process for collecting provisions to care for the needs of his large staff (over 500 people)
 - c. We even saw his wisdom when it came to academics and the arts—the writing of over 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs, plus knowledge of plants, animals, creeping things and fish

- d. He was “wiser than all men” and men and kings from all over the earth came to hear him lecture on such things (4:29-34)
2. We now see his wisdom put to use in another way: overseeing the building of one of the largest and most impressive building complexes in the ancient world (READ 5:12-18):
 - a. Verse 12 serves as both a summary of Solomon’s dealings with Hiram and an introduction to his work as the general contractor for the building of the temple—both are provided in this chapter as an example of the wisdom God gave to Solomon
 - b. Solomon’s temple was considered one of the great wonders of the ancient world and it required a massive work force to complete:
 - 1) To put things in perspective, one of the other wonders, the Great Pyramid of Giza, is estimated to have taken 100,000 workers over 20 years to complete
 - 2) In comparison, Solomon managed a work force nearly double that size—at least 180,000 workers—for over seven years to build the temple complex
 - 3) He drafted 30,000 Israelites to work in Lebanon (5:13-14)
 - a) According to 1 Kings 9:22, Solomon didn’t enslave any Israelites so these were not slaves but rather workers who were drafted for compulsory labor, much like our military draft
 - b) They worked one month in Lebanon and then returned home to work their fields for two months
 - 4) He put together a labor force of 150,000 slaves (5:15):
 - a) They was taken from the descendants of the Canaanites who still lived in Israel (the ones Israel failed to destroy or drive out of the land; 1 Kings 9:20-21)
 - b) 70,000 were used as transporters who carried the stone from Hiram’s ships to the location of the temple
 - c) 80,000 were used to cut stone in the mountains
 - 5) Finally, he assigned 3300 chief deputies to oversee the project and manage the two workforces just mentioned (5:16)
 3. Takeaway: Wisdom that comes from God goes beyond that which can be learned through human observation or one’s own intelligence:
 - a. Consider what we read in 6:1 (READ)
 - 1) Solomon was only 24 years old when he began to build the temple!
 - 2) Even more impressive, is the fact that as far as we know Solomon had no prior building experience (he would have been far too young to have helped David with his palace)
 - 3) Solomon’s ability to oversee such a massive building project isn’t something he learned, or something he conjured up in his own intelligence—it was wisdom given to him by God and v. 12 reminded us of this
 - b. God’s wisdom is like this:
 - 1) We don’t discover it on our own or conjure it from our own intelligence
 - 2) He reveals it, through His word and through His Holy Spirit
 - 3) This is why the Bible repeatedly links genuine wisdom with the fear of the Lord
 - 4) It’s why we are warned against being wise in our own eyes, and instead seek the wisdom of God