

CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE- PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 3B

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

CHAPTER 6 & 7

INTRODUCTION

Solomon's first important spiritual work was to build the Temple. The LORD had not allowed David to build it because David had shed too much blood. This privilege was given to Solomon. But before Solomon began building the Temple, he organized the machinery of the government, which was a wise thing to do. After building the Temple, Solomon built his own palace. These two chapters are devoted to the description of the building of the Temple and Solomon's personal house. Chapter 6 and 7 describe in detail Solomon's work of building the Temple as well as being contrasted by the building of his own house.

The building of the Temple in Jerusalem marked a high-point in the history of the nation of Israel and the development of Israel's religion. They had been a nomadic people living in tents and tending their flocks and herds for 40 years in the wilderness. Wherever they temporarily stayed, they would pitch the Tabernacle, which was their worship centre. Now they

were a settled people living in cities and fortresses and had even a capital city, Jerusalem, with plans of a palace.

It was God's inspiration and providential control that brought them success till now. In God's providence, it was time to accord more permanence to their worship centre as David had desired. God showed His continued guidance and encouragement to Solomon. In the midst of the fame and wealth which he had been blessed with, Solomon would then build "the house of the LORD."

OUTLINE

1. Solomon builds the temple (6: 1-10);
2. The word of the Lord came to Solomon (6:11-13);
3. The internal and external description of the temple (6:14-38; 7:13-51);
4. The construction of Solomon's Palace (7:1-12)

COMMENTARY

Solomon Builds the Temple– 6:1-10

As the preparations for the building of the Temple was complete, chapter 6 gives a detailed description of the building. The year in which the Temple was built is given here. The fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel is around 965/6 B.C. (based on comparative dating). Work on the Temple commenced in the second month Zif (or Ziv). This date is significant because we can calculate

the time when the Exodus took place. The writer puts it at 480 years before the commencement of the building of the Temple. The date of the Exodus therefore is 965/6 plus 480 and the sum is 1445/6 B.C.¹

The external parts of the Temple are given first (6:2-10). The Temple was rectangular in shape measuring 90 feet length (60 cubits @ 1.5 feet per cubit) by 30 feet breadth (20 cubits @ 1.5 feet per cubit) and the height 45 feet (30 cubits @ 1.5 feet per cubit). It comprised the porch or entrance hall leading to the main hall and then to the inner sanctuary (6:3-6). There were narrow windows on the walls that gave lights to the holy place and store-rooms built three storeys high along the walls of the temple (6:4, 5). There was an entrance on the right side of each store-room, and inside there was a staircase that led to the upper room. The temple was built of stones which were brought to the site, and during its construction, no iron tools like hammer and axe were used (6:7). This is an interesting statement. It means that the stones were already skilfully and precisely cut and prepared so that when they were brought to the building site there was no need to use the heavy metal tools to put them together. Just imagine the construction of the temple was done with the least noise or virtually in silence! There is a spiritual dimension to this interesting point which will be considered later.

¹ Using this date we can calculate the year when Abraham lived on earth. Refer Exodus 12:40; Genesis 47:9, 25:6; 21:5;

The Word of the LORD came to Solomon – 6:11-13

The Word of the LORD then came to Solomon that put the Temple in its proper theological perspective. This interjection from the LORD was very timely. It reminds Solomon of the spiritual aspect in this “carnal” exercise of building God a physical building.

The Temple had no spiritual value at all if God did not dwell in the midst of the people of Israel. God promised that He would never forsake them. But in order to ensure the continual presence of God in their midst they must obey God, keep His commandments and walk in His ways (6:11-13). Note also that God did not say that He dwelt in the Temple, but that He dwelt among His people.

According to 1 Kings 6:12-13, *“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: And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.”* God was not the least impressed by the physical building if it is not backed up by a life of obedience of the builder. It may be covered in gold from top to bottom and from inside and outside, but if the people who built it and the people who used it are sinful and live a life of sin and idolatry, the grandeur of the Temple will turn to vanity instantly.

NOTE: the three verbs used to describe God’s requirement of Solomon’s life and conduct. “WALK,”

“EXECUTE,” and “KEEP.” Solomon must first practise the Word of God in his own life. If he is not prepared to do so, the next two steps would be sheer hypocrisy. His own life as the king of Israel must be one of holiness and sobriety. He must live by example as he sits on the throne. The whole nation would look to him as the example par excellence.

The second verb is one of action. He must execute God’s judgement justly and without partiality. It is so easy for a king with absolute power and with his super abundant genius and wisdom to allow pride and power to ruin and destroy him. His own life of humility will be the stabilizing factor. Then he will be able to practise what he preaches and lives out in his own life. There is no contradiction. The third verb is to “KEEP” which means to guard or preserve God’s Word for future generations. He cannot afford to be myopic in his outlook of the ministries of God. He may obey and execute the Word of God well in his lifetime but it would be most irresponsible of him if he were to die in his generation without first preparing a faithful king to follow in his footsteps and to ensure that the same Word of God which he used would also be used by his successor. The Word and work of God must be faithfully passed on to the next generations.

Once these are done, then will God dwell in the midst of His people. The opulence of temples all over the Gentile world has always impressed historians. The greatness of their

architecture and the elaborate details and size of gentile temples have fascinated historians from the western world to the Far East. But in God’s eyes, these physical buildings are like empty tombs containing dead bodies should the builders of and worshippers in these temples be idolatrous. This standard of assessment by God remains the same when he evaluates His own people even after they have built God’s Temple.

There were two chambers in the Temple, like the Tabernacle, which are the Holy Place and the Holy of holies.

The Internal and External Description of the Temple – 6:14-38; 7:13-51

The temple was covered in gold from top to bottom both in the interior and exterior. 1 Kings 6:21-22 says, “*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. 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.*”

Inside the innermost part of the sanctuary i.e. the oracle or the Holy of Holies there were two cherubims each 15 feet in height (10 cubits @ 1.5 feet per cubits). These were also in gold. This represented heaven itself where the cherubims were always present, waiting and ready to do the will of God.

What the Temple represented was basically the home of God on earth in the midst of His people. This was the great honour that the LORD

bestowed upon Solomon and Israel: Solomon for being the one chosen to build God's dwelling place; and Israel for being the only nation in the whole world where God would put his house! The foundation of this house was completed in the fourth year in the month of zif i.e. exactly 4 years from the day he started building. The exact time to complete the House of God was 7 years and 6 months since Bul was the eighth month and Zif being the first month. The eleventh year is mentioned with reference to Solomon's reign and the total time taken to complete God's House was 7 years and 6 months (cf. 6:38).

The description of the building of the Temple continues from chapter 7 verse 13. Hiram personally came down to erect two pillars of brass the height of each was 27 feet with a circumference 18 feet. The two pillars were ornately decorated. These two pillars were set up at the porch of the Temple. Names were given to each of them: Jachin was the name of the left pillar and Boaz the right pillar. Jachin means "It shall be established" and Boaz means "With what strength." For Solomon or any child of God looking at the Temple on the left pillar Jachin reminded him of the promise of God to establish the Davidic line, and on the right Boaz reminded him that it would be by the power of God. These two pillars were bound to catch the eyes of the worshippers for they were beautifully carved and decorated.

We next read of a round "molten sea" of about fifteen feet in diameter, with a height of 7½ feet with a

circumference of 45 feet. This was a large metal basin, which was filled with water. This large basin was supported by twelve bulls in sets of three; each set of bulls facing each point of the compass. Next described were ten moveable stands (7:27-37) decorated with lions, bulls and cherubims each designed to hold a basin smaller than the sea (7:30, 38). Five stands with their basin were placed on the south side and the other on the north side (7:39). Then Hiram made basins, shovels, and sprinkling bowls (7:40). These were used for the cleaning of the altar.

When the building of the Temple was completed, the focus was back to Solomon. He made an altar of gold (incense); the table of gold for the shewbread; the golden lampstands, ten of them five on each side; the golden tongs, snuffers and along with all the other associated utensils. Having accomplished these, Solomon then moved in all the treasures his father David had dedicated to the LORD. It took seven years for the Temple to be completed (6:38).

The Construction of Solomon's Palace – 7:1-12

The description of the building of the Temple was briefly interrupted by the description of the building of Solomon's palace, which took thirteen years! It is quite clear why the writer introduced this section with the adversative word "but" for contrast. Now Solomon is condemned for spending almost twice as much time in building his palace as he spent in building the temple.

The dimensions of Solomon's personal house were 150 feet length (100 cubits @ 1.5 feet per cubit), 75 feet breadth (50 cubits @ 1.5 feet per cubit) and 45 feet height (30 cubits @ 1.5 feet per cubit). This means that the house of Solomon was 60 feet longer, and 45 feet broader. In terms of percentage Solomon's house was 67% longer and 150% broader. In terms of volume Solomon's house was bigger than the LORD's house by a whooping 316%. This does not speak well of Solomon at all. The time taken coupled with the size of Solomon's house implies that the house of Solomon was more important to Solomon than God's house. The opulence of his house is seen in the many jewels that decked his house. His wife also had her own "throne" room similar to his. The greater care he placed in his own home more than that for God's is clearly seen here.

PRACTICAL VALUE

It is significant that the Temple was build with as little noise as possible. No heavy metal tools were used. The spiritual lesson is significant. The work of God should be done with the least fanfare and sensationalism. It is God that works and bring about salvation. Did not the Lord Jesus Christ incarnate come humbly and without a fanfare? The spread and advancement of the kingdom of God grew silently like a seed underground. Work unobtrusively but surely in witnessing the Lord Jesus Christ, remembering salvation is of the Lord.

The church building is not the house of God per se. Some Christians believe that the church building is where God is. God the Holy Spirit dwells in the body of every born-again Christian. But the most important thing in a church, the body of believers, is whether the people are obeying God, keeping His commandments, walking in His ways and loving Him! Does that mean that we should not have any church building?

If our attitude in giving to the Lord, whether in kind or service, is one which is careless and casual and if it costs us nothing, we ought to intuitively feel ashamed of what we are offering. May God help us to be what He wants us to be. AMEN

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: 1 Kings 6:1-38; 1 Corinthians 3:12-16

TUESDAY: 1 Kings 7:1-12; Matthew 20:25-28.

WEDNESDAY: 1 Kings 7:13-52; John 7:37-39; Psalm 119:9; John 15:3; Ephesians 5:25-27

THURSDAY: 1 Kings 6:1-38

FRIDAY: 1 Kings 7:1-52

Discussion Questions

1. Solomon's Temple was lain with gold so it is acceptable but not compulsory that modern churches today should have golden taps, door knobs, etc. How do you relate to this line of argument for building God's churches today?

2. Should our homes be compared with the church building in terms of grandeur, size, and extravagance? If so then is it true that our church building must the grandest of them all?

3. The temple was "the house of LORD". Today we refer to a church building as "the house of God, and we speak of coming into God's

house to worship Him. Is it helpful or a hindrance to use this term?

4. Should Calvary Pandan help build churches in 3rd world countries as well as 1st world countries? Explain your answer please.

5. Did Solomon act according to his God-given wisdom by drawing up a treaty with King Hiram to build the temple? Does this not mean that unbelievers have been used to build God's Temple? Is it OK to hold funfairs and resort to other forms of fund raising to build God's church?

6. How does God encourage and warn Solomon (6:11-13)?

7. In what area(s) of your Christian life do you want to devote the most effort and skill to live for the Lord in view of the kind of excellence Hiram gave to the temple work? What have you done to prepare for it?
