

I & II Kings



Lesson 2 – Chapters 5:1–9:9

Solomon's Temple

The temple in Jerusalem stood for years, emblematic of the glory of the God of Israel. In Deuteronomy, God foretold a time when the temple would provide a central place of worship, calling it “the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make His name to dwell there” (Deuteronomy 26:2). David longed to build such a dwelling place (2 Samuel 7:2), but God denied him that honor, giving it instead to his son, Solomon (2 Samuel 7:13). As we will discover in this lesson, the temple contained unsurpassed opulence, and while its construction is credited to Solomon, we must attribute all advance preparations to David because of Solomon's youth and inexperience (1 Chronicles 22:5).

Today, the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim mosque, sits atop the Temple Mount. Historically, the location of Solomon's temple uniquely ties the centralized worship fostered under Solomon to both the ancient patriarch Abraham and to Jesus Christ. 2 Chronicles 3:1 notes, “Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to David his father.” You may recall that, centuries earlier, Abraham took Isaac to “the land of Moriah” to offer him as a sacrifice there (Genesis 22:1–4). In future years, God would offer the ultimate sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, nearby at Golgotha.

Why Not David?

We may wonder why God allowed the honor of building the temple to Solomon and not to David, inasmuch as David longed to build God a house. While God foreknew the building of His house, He never requested that His people construct a dwelling place other than the portable tabernacle (Exodus 26–27). The ark of the covenant sat in the Most Holy Place. From the golden Mercy Seat that served as the lid of the ark, and from between the two golden cherubim that were part of this lid, God spoke to the leader of His people (Exodus 25:22). The Mercy Seat was also the place of atonement where the high priest would sprinkle blood once a year on the Day of Atonement for the sins of the people (see Leviticus 16). David brought the ark to Jerusalem to a place possibly near his house (2 Samuel 6:17). It seems no blood sacrifices occurred at this site; therefore, this location was an unofficial site of worship.

12. 1 Kings 5:3 and 1 Chronicles 22:8 offer answers about why God did not permit David to build His temple. What are they?
13. Take time to share information learned about the temple from your reading as suggested in Lesson 1.

The Temple

Read 1 Kings 5:1–6:38. As God ordained, Solomon began to work on a dwelling place for God's name. David's old ally, King Hiram of Tyre, oversaw the felling and shipping of aromatic cedars from Lebanon, which Solomon traded for grain (5:10–12). Laborers spent seven years building Solomon's temple (6:38).

14. The labor needed to build the temple involved 30,000 men plus 70,000 burden bearers, 80,000 stonecutters, and 3,300 chief officers (1 Kings 5:13–16). Verse 13 mentions that Solomon "drafted forced labor." Why might "forced labor" be a concern for any king after Solomon?
15. As Solomon's laborers erected the temple, God "came to Solomon" (1 Kings 6:11–13). How did God's covenant blessing of Israel relate to the faithfulness of her kings?

Solomon's Palace

Read 1 Kings 7:1–12. Although laborers finished the temple, work continued. For an additional thirteen years (note: nearly twice the time spent building the temple), Solomon built an elaborate palace nearby consisting of four buildings. The four buildings covered a space larger than the temple.

16. List the names of the four buildings Solomon erected as part of his palace complex.

Temple Furnishings

Read 1 Kings 7:13–8:11. Artisans created hundreds of ornate items to decorate Solomon's temple, as well as utensils of bronze and burnished bronze. Many of the vessels used in worship were of gold (7:48). Then God filled the temple with His presence concealed in a cloud of smoke (8:10–11).

17. The most sacred space in the temple was the Most Holy Place. The most sacred object in this space was the ark of the covenant. What was contained inside (8:6, 9)?
18. Explain the ark's significance to the Israelites' worship life (Leviticus 16:11–22).

Temple Dedication

Read 1 Kings 8:12–66. At last, both the temple and Solomon's palace were complete.

19. Through Solomon's prayer of dedication, God spoke to His people. How might Israel lose the Promised Land and how might they regain it (8:33–34)?

God's Response

Read 1 Kings 9:1–9. God appeared to Solomon again after Israel presented her best sacrifices. God's response carried with it a promise and a warning.

20. What would happen to the temple if Israel “[served] other gods and [worshiped] them” (9:6–9)?

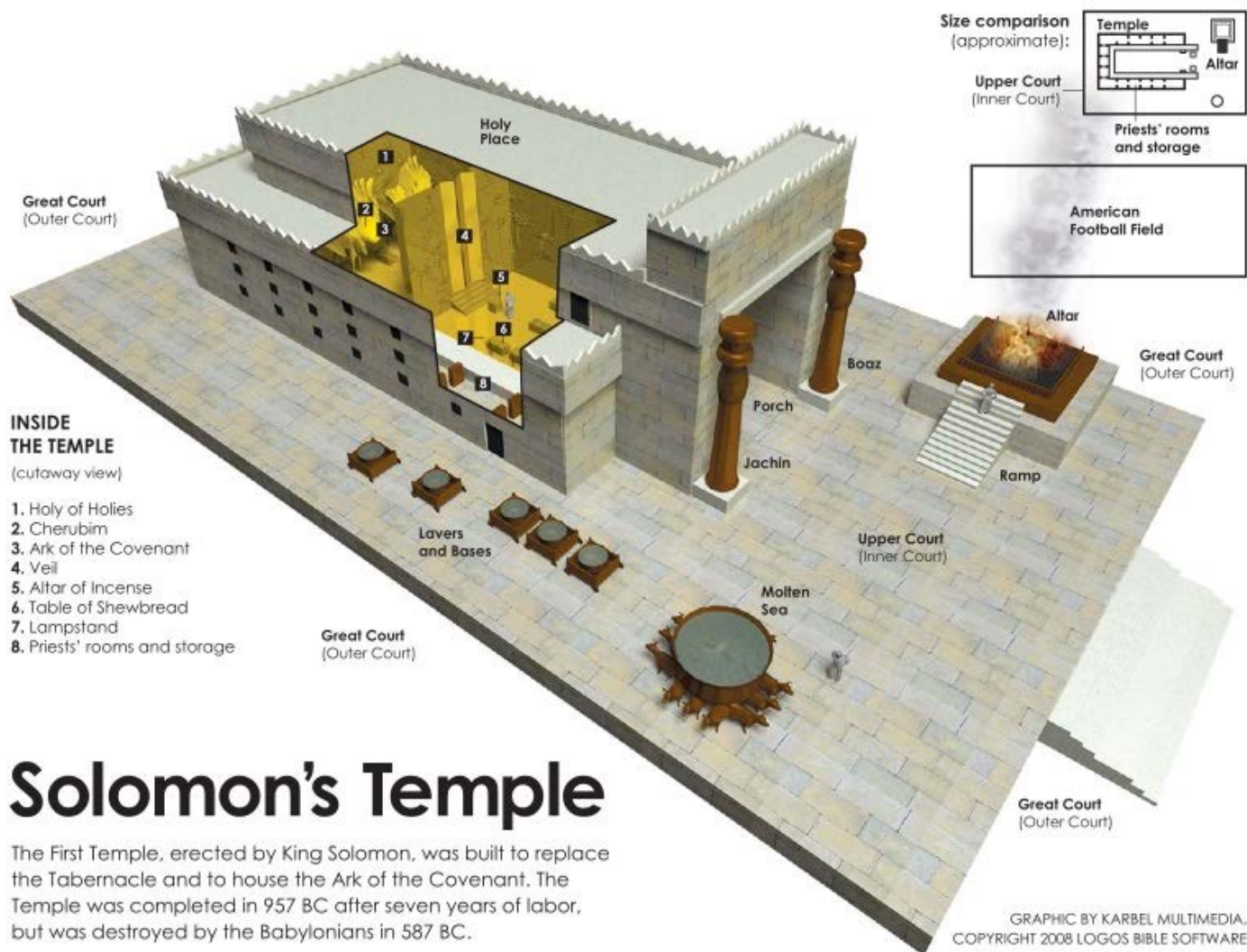
God's Word for Today

The Babylonians overran Jerusalem in 587 BC, leaving behind a pile of rubble that had once been Solomon's temple. Herod's temple renovation project lasted years, but the Roman army razed it, too, in AD 70. Today, a mosque occupies the Temple Mount.

21. What event rendered the system of sacrifices and the temple itself useless (Hebrews 9:24–26)?
22. God no longer dwells in a temple made of stone. God dwells fully in the flesh of Christ (John 1:14; Colossians 1:19–20). Where also does God's Spirit dwell today (2 Corinthians 6:16)?

In Closing

- † Consult your Bible dictionary for facts about the Queen of Sheba, who visited Solomon because of his wisdom.
- † Using a Bible dictionary or other resource, investigate the religions that swayed Solomon. Especially take note of Ashtoreth, Milcom, Chemosh, and Molech worship. Think about why God would find these religions detestable.
- † Read **1 Kings 9:10–11:43** to prepare for the next session.



Solomon's Temple

The First Temple, erected by King Solomon, was built to replace the Tabernacle and to house the Ark of the Covenant. The Temple was completed in 957 BC after seven years of labor, but was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC.

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