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Israel and Judah: 17. Solomon's Early Reign

by David Sielaff, April 2016

Read the accompanying [Newsletter for April 2016](#)

Israel and Judah: 17

Solomon's
Early
Reign

THE SITUATION: Solomon is the sole ruler of the united Kingdom of Israel. Solomon inherits much from David — a vast empire with kings who owe fidelity to him as their superior, great wealth from David's conquests, a nation with a growing population and, as we shall read, great celebrity because of his wisdom. He also begins to fulfill the commission given to him from YHWH as told by his father King David. For this we have two accounts, one in First Kings and the other in Second Chronicles, but they parallel each other less than usual.

TEXT: The Extent of Solomon's Empire

1 Kings 4:20–21

²⁰ Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand which is on the sea shore for multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing.

²¹ As for Solomon, he came to be the ruler over all the *kingdoms* from the Stream *as far as* the land of the Philistines unto the boundary of Egypt; they brought close approach presents and were serving Solomon all the days of his life.

2 Chronicles 9:26

²⁶ He came to be ruler over all the *kings* from the stream *unto* the land of the Philistines and unto the boundary of Egypt. [end text]

Verse 20. The demographics of Judah and Israel are described. Populations can grow quickly during times of prosperity. David's rule of 33 years in Jerusalem of all 12 tribes was prosperous for the people of Israel in spite of two short rebellions by two of David's sons.

“**Eating and drinking and rejoicing**” was a way of stating these were prosperous times for common people and that taxes for the King's court and administration were not grievous in times of plenty.

1 Kings 4:21; 2 Chronicles 9:26. These verses tell us the extent of Solomon's empire. It went from “**the**

Stream,” meaning the Euphrates River, to **“the boundary of Egypt”** which was the eastern-most tributary of the Nile River. Usually in the Middle East, mountains are boundaries but for David’s and Solomon’s empire the boundaries were rivers.

No boundary to the south is mentioned which could have one of two meanings. First, it could mean that the southern boundary was somewhere in the desert of Arabia, south of Palestine. The second meaning could be that the extent of Solomon’s empire (which he controlled but did not directly rule) included all of the Arabian peninsula. If the second was true, then his area of control was truly vast. It would explain his later interest to develop maritime trade east of the Arabian peninsula to India and even Africa (1 Kings 9:26–28), particularly Ethiopia or Sheba (although its location is uncertain).

The kings and kingdoms all sent Solomon gifts, which means they sent him tribute as a superior king and acknowledging his superiority over them. They owed him loyalty, obedience, and tribute. The tribute went to Solomon personally.

TEXT: Solomon’s Wealth and Power

1 Kings 4:22–28

²² Solomon’s bread for one day was thirty cors [“measures,” KJV] of flour and sixty cors of meal [flour], ²³ ten plump oxen and twenty grazed oxen, a hundred of the flock, besides deer and gazelle, bubale and fattened fowl.

²⁴ He was holding sway in all the land this side of the Stream, from Tiphshah as far as Gaza, over all the kings this side of the Stream; and peace came to him from all his sides round about. ²⁵ Judah and Israel dwelt in serenity, each man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan unto Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.

²⁶ Solomon came to have 4,000 stalls of horses for his chariots and 12,000 steeds [horses to be ridden].

²⁷ Those deputies provided for king Solomon and all who came near to king Solomon’s table, each in his month; they let nothing be lacking. ²⁸ They also brought, each as his due, barley and crushed straw for the horses and stallions to wherever the place might be. [end text]

Verses 22–23. These daily provisions for Solomon’s palace are an indicator about the size of his administration and government.

Verse 24. The extent of Solomon’s empire is repeated, but with additional details. It seems the Philistine lands were not part of his direct control, and that Israel was at peace **“from all his sides round about.”**

Verse 26. For **“4,000 stalls of horses,”** see 1 Kings 10:26 and 2 Chronicles 9:25 where these numbers are repeated. Most Hebrew manuscripts have 40,000 as the number of stalls, and the Greek Septuagint has the number as 40,000, but they are said to be **“brood mares.”** While most commentators state that the horses were used for cavalry or chariot units, I am not so sure. Many of the horses were likely used for communication as an early royal mail system in times of peace.

Verse 27. The deputies are presented in 1 Kings 4:7–19, and mention of them continues in verse 22.

“Solomon had twelve deputies over all of Israel. They provided for the king and his household; it rested on each one to provide them with food for one month in the year.”

• 1 Kings 4:7

The deputies’ responsibility was to oversee delivery of provisions for King Solomon and his court. This year-round assignment was apportioned to each deputy in their regions of responsibility. Their areas coordinate somewhat with the boundaries of the tribes of Israel. It is likely that special provisions for the spring and fall feasts were provided from all twelve deputies, particularly once the Temple construction was completed.

These provisions were for the king and his court and administrators only. Other provisions were made for the many thousands involved in the actual construction of the Temple and Solomon’s new palace.

TEXT: Solomon's Reputation for Wisdom

1 Kings 4:29–34

²⁹ Elohim gave Solomon wisdom, exceedingly much understanding and wideness of heart,

[1] like the sand which is on the sea shore.³⁰ The wisdom of Solomon was

[2] greater than the wisdom of all the sons of the east, and

[3] all the wisdom of Egypt.³¹ He was wiser than any other human,

[4] wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite and Heman and Calcol and Darda the sons of Mahol.

So his name became famous in all the nations round about.³² He composed 3,000 proverbs, and his songs came to be 5,000 [1,005].^a ³³ He spoke about the trees, from the cedar of the Lebanon unto the hyssop which is coming forth in the sidewall. He spoke about the beast and the flyer, about the reptile and the fish.³⁴ They came from all the peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and he took approach presents from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom. [end text]

Verse 29–31. Imagine, having wisdom given to you from God Himself, as well as a **“wideness of heart,”** which meant that Solomon had comprehensive knowledge. In other words he knew much about a variety of subjects. Solomon studied deeply and learned useful information about a wide range of subjects. He did so systematically. Four comparisons of the wisdom of Solomon are made to other people.

Note this additional information in verse 30:

“Ethan, Heman, Calcol and Darda were the sons of Zerah” (1 Chr 2:6). Heman and Ethan authored Pss 88–89, two of the wisdom psalms. The term “Ezrahite” which is applied to Ethan in 1 Kgs 4:31 and to both Ethan and Heman in the psalm titles is probably a variation of the family name Zerah. The Levites Ethan and Heman of 1 Chr 6:33, 44 who were singers appointed by David may be the same men mentioned here. If this is the case, then these Levites, by virtue of their residence, would have been incorporated into the Judahite family of Zerah.”

• **“1 Kgs 4:29–34,” in Smith, *The Books of History*^b**

Verses 30–31. The regions of **“the east”** and Egypt southwest of Israel are cited for being places where wisdom was honored and studied. Now a new individual was renowned for his wisdom: Solomon of Israel, a land at the crossroads of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Four well known individuals are specifically named and are said to be inferior to Solomon in wisdom.

Verse 31. Jesus specifically stated he was greater than Solomon (Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31), and this refers to wisdom. That is quite a statement by our Lord!

Verse 32. The Greek Septuagint translation has that Solomon wrote 5,000 songs. King James Version and most English translations have that Solomon wrote 1,005 songs. This number is in accord with the Hebrew Masoretic text and I believe the 1,005 number is most likely to be accurate.

Verse 33. Solomon spoke about his studies in botany and zoology. His research likely involved observation, classification, dissection, and probably breeding.

Verse 34. The phrase **“they came from all the peoples”** (peoples, plural) refers to people of wisdom who came from all over the region. The word is not “nations” but “peoples.” Egypt and the east are specifically mentioned. Not only did people of wisdom come to interact and learn from Solomon, but foreign kings came also to visit Solomon as we find in later verses. Only a confident ruler of a stable kingdom would dare

^a It is also clear that Solomon organized observations from several locations to conduct what we today would call research. Dr. Ernest Martin “unpacks” and explains the scope of Solomon’s wisdom in his fascinating article [“The Bible and Scientific Mysteries, Part 1.”](#)

^b James E. Smith, *The Books of History*, Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), 1 Kings 4:29–34.

leave the lands he ruled to visit another king or realm. Apparently it was very important for them to risk rebellion by leaving their kingdom, just to spend time with Solomon and learn from his wisdom.

More Details about Temple Preparations

In 1 Kings chapter 5 and 2 Chronicles chapter 1, we are told that Solomon writes a letter to Hiram, King of the large independent Phoenician city-state of Tyre, about supplies he requires to build the Temple of YHWH. In particular, Solomon is interested in acquiring quantities of cedar and other woods for the interior of the Temple that are available only in Lebanon, the area ruled by Hiram. While all the Jewish Temples were made of stone, there was wood on the inside that burned each time the Temples were destroyed. The burning wood melted the gold foil that was inlaid into and over the wood.

In 1 Kings 5:1–6 we get an extensive portion of Solomon’s letter to Hiram and an even longer extract in 2 Chronicles 2:1–10.^c This next section is difficult to follow because there is less agreement between the Kings and Chronicles passages than usual.

TEXT: Solomon Writes to King Hiram of Tyre

1 Kings 5:1–6

¹ King Hiram of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, when he heard that they had anointed him as king in place of his father; for Hiram had been in friendship with David all his days. ² Solomon sent to Hiram, saying,

³ **“You know of my father David that he was not able to build a House for the Name of Yahweh his Elohim in view of the warfare with which they surrounded him until Yahweh put them under the soles of his feet.”**

⁴ **But now Yahweh my Elohim has given me rest from those round about; there is no adversary and there is no oncoming peril.**

⁵ **So here I am declaring to build a House for the Name of Yahweh my Elohim, just as Yahweh had spoken to my father David, saying, ‘Your son whom I shall set on your throne in your place, he**

2 Chronicles 2:1–10

¹ Solomon resolved to build a House for the Name of Yahweh and a house for his royal position.

² Solomon numbered 70,000 men as burden carriers, and 80,000 men as stone hewers in the hill-country, and 3,600 men as overseers over them.

³ Then Solomon sent to *king Hiram of Tyre*, saying,^d

“Just as you dealt with my father David and sent him cedar to build himself a house to dwell in it —

⁴ **behold, I his son am building a House for the Name of Yahweh my Elohim”**

^c There is an interesting passage from the Jewish historian Josephus regarding the letters between Solomon and Hiram. It is in *Antiquities of the Jews* 8:55:

“The copies of these letters remain to this day, and are preserved not only in our books, but among the Tyrians also; insomuch that if anyone would know the certainty about them, he may desire of the keepers of the public records of Tyre to show them to him, and he will find what is there set down to agree with what we have said.”

Josephus declared that the original letter from Solomon, and copies of Hiram’s letter to Solomon were still in a library in the city of Tyre, after almost 1,000 years. There no doubt was a large correspondence between the two men.

^d Hiram is consistently spelled Hiram due to a Hebrew variant in Chronicles.

shall build the House for My Name.’

⁶ Now give instructions that they cut for me cedars from the Lebanon. My servants, they shall be with your servants; I shall give the hire for your servants to you according to all that you might say; for you know that there is no one among us who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians.”

to sanctify it to Him for fuming incense of spices before Him, for the continuous bread in array, and for the morning and the evening ascent approaches on sabbaths, on new moons and on appointed festivals of Yahweh our Elohim; for the eon this will be upon Israel. ⁵ The House that I am building shall be great, for our Elohim is greater than all the elohim.

⁶ Yet who could retain vigor to build Him a House, since the heavens and the heavens of the heavens cannot contain Him? And who am I that I should build Him a House save to fume incense before Him?

⁷ Now send me a wise man, skilled at working in gold, in silver, in bronze and in iron, also in purple, vermillion and blue wool, and knowing how to engrave engravings together with the wise men who are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom my father David provided.

⁸ Send me cedar timbers, firs and algum wood from the Lebanon, for I know that your servants are skilled at cutting the timber of Lebanon. Now my servants will work with your servants

⁹ to provide me with abundant timber, for the House that I am building will be great and marvelous. ¹⁰ I will even provide 20,000 cors of wheat as food for your servants, the choppers who cut down the trees, also 20,000 cors of barley, 20,000 bath measures of wine, and 20,000 bath measures of oil.” [end text]

1 Kings 5:1. King Hiram of Tyre sent ambassadors to salute the new king of Israel. Hiram no doubt sent gifts with his ambassadors to Solomon, but such gifts were not tribute to a superior. The two were kings of equal status, rank, and power. When they returned home they carried a letter from Solomon to Hiram.

1 Kings 5:3. “until Yahweh put them under the soles of his feet” is similar to expressions from Psalms 18:37–38, 47:3, and 110:1.

2 Chronicles 2:1–2. Some of these numbers are repeated later.

2 Chronicles 2:7. Solomon requests a wise craftsman to supervise the finest work for the Temple.

1 Kings 5:6 and 2 Chronicles 2:8. Solomon says he will send men to help the Tyrian loggers, perhaps with the cutting, but certainly with the transport of the wood to Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 2:9. This verse is basically repeated in 1 Kings 5:11 below. See the note there.

2 Chronicles 2:10. These provisions were the foodstuffs provided to those in Lebanon working on Solomon’s behalf. Solomon shipped the food supplies to Hiram. Tyre was on an island and imported all its

food. This statement is made below in 1 Kings 5:11 (below) but was placed earlier in Chronicles.

Next we read that Solomon's letter was answered by Hiram (called Hiram in Chronicles) and the request for the supplies was acknowledged and fulfilled.

“Hiram rejoiced at the prospect of continued friendly relations with Israel. He praised Yahweh the God of Israel for having given David so wise a son as his successor. The wisdom of the youthful king was evident to Hiram because (1) he had chosen the path of peaceful coexistence; (2) he earnestly desired to fulfill the purposes of his father; and (3) he had made the worship of God the foremost concern of his reign (5:7).”

• **“1 Kgs 5:1 // 2 Chr 2:16,” Smith, The Books of History**

We can read Hiram's response below, again with varying degrees of convergence. This does not mean that one or the other author is wrong, it means that each selectively quotes part of the response they feel is most important for their audience to know.

TEXT: Hiram's Response to Solomon

1 Kings 5:7–10

⁷ It came to be as Hiram heard the words of Solomon that he rejoiced exceedingly and said,

“Blessed be Yahweh today,

Who has given David a wise son over this numerous people.”

⁸ So Hiram sent to Solomon, saying,

“I have heard what you sent to me; as for me, I shall provide all your desire in regard to timber of cedars and timber of firs.”

[NOTE: 1 Kings 7:13–14 is inserted here]

¹³ King Solomon sent and took Hiram from Tyre; ¹⁴ he was the son of a widowed woman from the stock of Naphtali; his father was a Tyrian man, an artificer in bronze. He was full of wisdom and understanding and knowledge for making all work in bronze. So he came to king Solomon and carried out all his work.

[Return to 1 Kings 5:9–10]

⁹ **My servants themselves shall bring them**

2 Chronicles 2:11–16

¹¹ King Hiram of Tyre replied in writing and sent it to Solomon: **“In love for His people has Yahweh put you over them as king.”** ¹² And Hiram went on to say:

“Blessed be Yahweh Elohim of Israel,
Who made the heavens and the earth,
Who has given king David a wise son,

endued with intelligence and understanding, who is about to build a House for Yahweh and a house for his royal position.

¹³ **I now send you Huram-abi, a wise man endued with understanding, ¹⁴ the son of a woman from the daughters of Dan; his father was a Tyrian man. He is skilled at working in gold, in silver, in bronze, in iron, in precious stones and in wood, in purple, in blue wool, in fine linen and in vermillion; he knows how to engrave any engraving and to devise any design that may be given to him, together with your wise men and the wise men of my lord, your father David.**

¹⁵ **Now let my lord send his servants the wheat and the barley, the oil and the wine which my lord promised.**

¹⁶ **As for ourselves, we shall cut down**

[the trees] **down from the Lebanon to the sea; I shall bring them as log-rafts by sea to the place that you shall point out to me. I will have them scattered there, and you can take them up. As for you, you shall provide my desire by giving the bread for my household.**"

¹⁰ So it came to be that Hiram was providing Solomon with timber of cedars and timber of firs for all his desire.

trees from the Lebanon according to all your need and shall bring them to you as rafts by sea to Joppa;

then you can take them up to Jerusalem."

[end text]

1 Kings 5:7. Hiram "**heard the words of Solomon,**" meaning that Hiram either heard Solomon's message from his servants or ambassadors, or he had a letter from Solomon that was read aloud to him (as was common in ancient times). He responds positively to Solomon's request for a large quantity of cedar, a wood highly prized as building material for temples. This positive answer likely deflected potential conflict and set the stage for future commercial cooperation that was profitable for both of the kings.

2 Chronicles 2:13–14. In response to Solomon's request in 2 Chronicles 2:7, Hiram says he is sending to Solomon his finest craftsman, who is also named Huram.

2 Chronicles 2:13 [and 1 Kings 7:14]. Hiram's parentage seems confusing, but here is a simple explanation. Hiram's mother was born in Dan [**"from the daughters of Dan"**] and married a man from the Israelite tribe of Naphtali [**"a widowed woman from the stock of Naphtali"**]. He died, she was a widow who married a man of the kingdom of Tyre [**"his father was a Tyrian man"**]. Hiram the artist/craftsman, by his mother being an Israelite, was himself considered an Israelite, and not a Gentile working on the Israelite Temple.

TEXT: Hiram's Response to Solomon

1 Kings 5:11–18

¹¹ As for Solomon, he gave Hiram 20,000 cors of wheat as food for his household and 20,000 bath measures of pounded oil. Thus Solomon provided for Hiram year after year.

¹² Yahweh, He gave Solomon wisdom just as He had spoken to him; there came to be peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them contracted a covenant.

¹³ Then king Solomon set up tributary service from all of Israel; the tributary service came to be 30,000 men. ¹⁴ He sent them to the Lebanon, 10,000 a month in relays. For a month they were in the Lebanon and two months at their homes. Adoniram was over the tributary service.

¹⁵ Solomon came to have 70,000 burden carriers and 80,000 stone hewers in the hill country.

¹⁶ Besides Solomon's chief deputies over the

2 Chronicles 2:17–18

¹⁷ Solomon numbered all the men who were sojourners [goyim, Gentiles] in the land of Israel, after the numbering when his father David had enumerated them; and they were found to be 153,600.

¹⁸ He assigned 70,000 of them as burden carriers, and 80,000 as stone hewers in the hill-country, and

work, there were 3,600 who were holding sway over the people doing the work.

¹⁷ The king gave instructions so that they quarried out large stones, blocks of quality stone, to provide a foundation of trimmed stones for the House. ¹⁸ So Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders and the Gebalites carved them and made the timbers and the stones ready during three years to build the House.

3,600 men as overseers to make the people serve.

[end text]

1 Kings 5:12. A covenant or an agreement between two kings (or nations) today is called a treaty. Scholars have identified several similarities between ancient covenants or treaties, such as between Solomon and Hiram, which contain some of the same provisions as God's covenant with Israel. Each covenant partner had rights and responsibilities under the covenant. If any provision of the covenant was broken, there were remedies — and punishments — written into the covenant text prescribing solutions. Solomon's treaty with Hiram was between two kings of equal status. God's covenant with Israel was different. God was a superior ruler in status, power, and responsibility. YHWH was Israel's king and sovereign ruler.^c Part of all covenant agreements were peace provisions delineating borders, trade, and dispute resolution.

1 Kings 5:13. "**Tributary service**" meant a levy was obtained from the people "**from all Israel.**" Whether these men were conscripted or volunteers, we do not know. These were not Canaanites still in the land as some have thought. These Israelites worked in groups of 10,000 per month laboring with the wood from Lebanon. One month working the tributary service and 2 months off.

2 Chronicles 2:17. The word "**sojourners**" is *goyim*, Gentiles or nations, also translated "strangers."

1 Kings 5:15–16, 2 Chronicles 2:18. These numbers were given in 2 Chronicles 2:2 as well as in these two verses. I do not know why, except that repeating the numbers emphasizes the importance and vast scale of the Temple construction. The stone were cut from quarries "**in the hill-country.**" This is surprising because there are excellent limestone quarries near Jerusalem. Perhaps they were not discovered in Solomon's time, or perhaps the quality was not what Solomon and the builders desired.

TEXT: Construction Begins on the Temple

1 Kings 6:1–3

¹ It came to be in the four hundred and eightieth year **AFTER** the sons of Israel had come forth from the land of Egypt, in the fourth year,

in the month of Ziv (it is the second month), of Solomon's reign over Israel, that he began to build the House for Yahweh.

² The House that king Solomon built for Yahweh was sixty cubits in its length,

twenty cubits in its width and thirty cubits in its rise.

³ The portico on the facade of the nave of the House was twenty cubits in its length, on the facade

2 Chronicles 3:1–4a

¹ Then Solomon started to build the House of Yahweh in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah where He had appeared to his father David, at the place which David had prepared on the threshing site of Ornan the Jebusite. ² He started to build on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign.

³ Solomon laid these foundations for the building of the House of the One, Elohim:

Its length in cubits by the former measure was sixty cubits, and its width twenty cubits.

⁴ And the portico on the facade of the House was twenty cubits in its length, on the facade

^c For background on the treaty-covenant similarities in ancient times, see George Mendenhall "[Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East, Part 1](#)," online. The provisions and forms of the Covenant/Treaty structure is discussed in "[Part 2](#)."

of the width of the House. It was ten cubits in its width on the facade of the House.

of the width of the House;

[end text]

1 Kings 6:1. A precise date is given for the beginning of the Temple's construction and it relates to the most significant event in Israel's history, the first Passover before the Exodus from Egypt. It is not quite possible — yet — to identify that exact date on our current calendar system. The date does not refer to an event after the Temple construction was begun and completed. The writer knew when those events occurred.

This information has been compiled and is being analyzed by friends of ASK, Henry Dye and Tim Parrott. See the "[ELM Timeline Project](#)" webpage where the current best estimate is presented. Others around the world are critiquing their information. They use Dr. Martin's dates of Christ's birth, crucifixion/resurrection/ascension, and revelation of the Mystery to Paul as central historical benchmarks. This detailed effort is a work in progress and will remain so after most of us are dead, until Christ returns. The relevant pages in the Timeline regarding construction of the Temple are TL-4, TL-4b, with the current best date being 954 BC (subject to change, see the relevant notes).

The Hebrew text says the construction of the Temple began "**in the 480th year after**" the Exodus. Does this mean "**in**" the 480th year, or "**in**" the year "**after**" the 480 years. Whichever is true, it was "**in**" the fourth year of Solomon's reign, the 2nd month of the year, the month of "Ziv" (see also 1 Kings 6:37). This identification is by the writer of First Kings (likely the prophet Isaiah) who wrote during King Hezekiah's reign.

2 Chronicles 3:1. This text says the Temple was built "**in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah.**"

1 Kings 6:3, 2 Chronicles 3:3. A portico is a raised porch or a platform supporting a throne.

Throughout the narratives about the constructions of Solomon, the texts say "Solomon did X" or "... did Y." He did not do these things, his workers did X or Y. This was merely a manner of expression.

Mount Moriah, Abraham, and Isaac

Isaac's thwarted sacrifice by Abraham did not take place on the mountain of Moriah containing the city of Jerusalem where the Temple was built by Solomon, although that was the Mount Moriah.

"Then He said: Take now your son [Isaac], your only one, whom you love, Isaac, and go by yourself to THE LAND of Moriah and offer him up there as an ascent offering on ONE of the mountains which I shall indicate to you."

• *Genesis 22:2*

We can be reasonably sure that Abraham did not try to sacrifice Isaac on the Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. Abraham intended to do so on one of the "**mountains**" in "**the land of Moriah.**" How can we be sure?

Abraham was met by Melchizedek, the king of Salem, after Abraham's victory over "**Kedorlaomer and the kings who were allied with him**" (Genesis 14:19; Hebrews 7:1–2). They did not meet at Salem; they met somewhere other than Salem. We are told in Psalm 76:2 that, speaking of God, "**His covert is in Salem And His habitation in Zion.**"^f Psalm 76 is attributed to Asaph, a songwriter and performer during the time of David. This verse identifies Salem with Zion. So, we have a chain of evidence that the Temple was constructed on Mount Moriah, which is Salem, which is Zion, therefore^g:

Mount Moriah = Salem = Zion

So, the Jebusite city, Salem, later came to be called Jebus. After David captured it, he named it "**the City of**

^f The term "**covert**" means "covering" and in several translations it is rendered "**tabernacle.**"

^g Another verse to consider is 2 Samuel 5:7, 1 Kings 8:1, and several others. First Chronicles 11:5 makes this triple connection:

"The dwellers of Jebus said to David, 'You shall not enter here. Yet David seized the fastness of Zion, that is, the city of David.'

Author Bob Cornuke strongly emphasizes these relationships, even though I have read these texts several times.

David,” which is Jerusalem.

Cities have kings, not barren wastelands. Abraham did not try to sacrifice his son on **the** Mount Moriah which was within the city or town of Salem at that time ruled by Melchizedek, but he was going to sacrifice Isaac in **“the land of Moriah ... on one of the mountains which I shall indicate to you”** (Genesis 22:2).^h

I think it likely Abraham tried to sacrifice Isaac somewhere close to the Mount of Olives which was not part of the Jerusalem suburbs until the 1st century BC or later, and even then it was an agricultural area. Abraham’s symbolic act at that location fits with Christ’s sacrifice on the Mount of Olives. The ram was a substitute for Isaac (Genesis 22:13–18), Christ was a substitute for us in our sins. Christ died in our place as the ram died in place of Isaac. Jesus was the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36). He was the Passover symbolized by the lamb at Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). All this is bound up in Temple symbolism.ⁱ

TEXT: Details of the Temple’s Construction

1 Kings 6:4–19

⁴ He also made shutters for the embrasures of the [clerestory] windows of the House.

⁵ Against the outside wall of the House he built a storied structure; around the sidewalls of the House, around to the nave and to the innermost sanctuary, he made stories round about. ⁶ The lower story was five cubits in its width, the middle six cubits in its width and the third seven cubits in its width; for he had provided offset ledges around the outside of the House, so as not to hold the rafters in the sidewalls of the House.

⁷ The House, when it was built, was built of blocks of stone made suitable at the quarry. So neither hammers nor an ax nor any iron implement were heard at the House while it was being built.

⁸ The portal of the lower story was at the right shoulder of the House; and winding stairs went up to the middle and from the middle to the third story. ⁹ Thus he was building the House that he might finish it; and he was ceiling the House with vaultbeams and roofing planks in cedar.

¹⁰ He was building the storied structure against the entire House, each story five cubits in its rise, so that it had a hold on the House with timbers of cedar.

¹¹ Now the word of Yahweh came to Solomon, saying,

¹² **“This House that you are building — if you walk in My statutes and execute My ordinances and keep all My instructions and walk in them, then I will confirm through you My word that I spoke to your father David. ¹³ I will tabernacle in the midst of the sons of Israel, and I shall not forsake My people Israel.”**

¹⁴ So Solomon was building the House that he might finish it. ¹⁵ He was building the sidewalls inside the House with angular wall panels of cedar. From the floor of the House unto the rafters of the ceiling he overlaid it with timber inside; and he overlaid the floor of the House with angular planks of fir.

¹⁶ Twenty cubits from the remote parts of the House, he was building a partition of angular cedar planks from the floor unto the rafters. Thus he was building inside from it the innermost sanctuary, the holy of holies. ¹⁷ Thus the length of the House before it, was forty cubits, that is the nave.

¹⁸ The cedar for the inside of the House had an embossing of colocynth gourds and open blossoms. It was all cedar; there was no stone to be seen.

¹⁹ As for the innermost sanctuary in the midst of the House, he prepared its inside to bestow there the coffer [ark] of the covenant of Yahweh.

[end text]

^h See my article [“Who Was Melchizedek?”](#) for more information as to who this mysterious person was.

ⁱ See Dr. Martin’s article [“Temple Symbolism in Genesis.”](#)

Verse 4. Clerestory windows are covered recessed openings in the stone wall that let in light but were not situated for looking through, being too high, but functioned so some light could be inside the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.^j Common sense dictates there must have been some provision (latticework or trellises) to prevent birds from entering.

Verse 7. For the sake of the king, his court, and the people in the city, all the chiseling of stone by hundreds of men was done off-site, away from the construction site. This likely means individual stones were measured and cut to specifications and then brought to the site for placement.

Verse 8. The Temple faces east, so “**the right shoulder of the House**” (the literal meaning) would be to the south. Therefore, this phrase is correctly translated “**the south side of the house**” in several translations.^k

Verses 11–13. There is a sudden interruption in the narrative of the description of the construction. YHWH speaks directly and personally to Solomon. Whether He spoke audibly or if the words were heard in Solomon’s mind, we cannot know. YHWH warns Solomon against disobedience and makes promises to him if he is faithful. YHWH says in verse 12, “**walk in My statutes and execute My ordinances and keep all My instructions and walk in them.**” To “walk in ...” someone’s commands means He wants Solomon to live according to God’s statutes, ordinances, and instructions.

Verses 15–19. The Holy of Holies is discussed. In verse 15 the phrasing “**he overlaid the floor of the house**” means that boards of wood were laid down on top of the stone pavement.

Verse 18. No stone was visible inside the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The interior walls were paneled in cedar wood with carved designs of gourds and blossoms, all overlaid with gold. When the Babylonians burned the Temple, this wood burned in what was basically a stone structure. The gold melted.

TEXT: Solomon Decorates the Temple

1 Kings 6:20–32

²⁰ The facade of the innermost sanctuary was twenty cubits in length, twenty cubits in width and twenty cubits in its rise. He overlaid it with plated gold.

He also made an altar of cedar.

²¹ Solomon overlaid the inside of the House with plated gold; he extended gold chains across the facade of the innermost sanctuary and overlaid it with gold.

²² Thus he overlaid the whole inside of the House with gold,

until all the House was finished; also the entire altar that was toward the innermost sanctuary,

he had overlaid

2 Chronicles 3:4b–14

^{4b} and its elevation was twenty [cubits]. He overlaid *it* on the inside with pure gold.

⁵ *The greater House he paneled with wood of fir and overspread it with good gold and set up on it palm trees and braids.*

⁶ He overlaid the House *with precious stone for beauty*; the gold was gold from Parvaim.

⁷ He overspread the House with gold — the rafters, the thresholds, its sidewalls and its doors; and he engraved cherubim on the sidewalls.

⁸ Inside he built the holy of holies; its length on the facade of the width of the House was twenty cubits, and its width was twenty cubits; he overspread it

^j Glass was not used for windows until 100 AD by the Romans, and then only for the wealthy for the next 1,500+ years. So, no, there were no stained glass windows in any of the Jewish Temples.

^k In fact, the expression “**right hand**” can mean “south.” Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon (Unabridged)*, 3962, p. 411: “**south, because when facing east the right hand is toward the south.**” See 1 Samuel 23:19, 24; Ezekiel 16:46; Psalms 89:13, 107:3 and 107:9, and “[The Location and Future Discovery of King David’s Tomb](#).”

with gold.

²³ In the innermost sanctuary he made two cherubim of oil-tree wood, each ten cubits in its rise.

²⁴ Five cubits was the one wing of the cherub and five cubits the second wing of the cherub. It was ten cubits from the end of its wings unto the other end of its wings.

²⁵ And ten cubits was the second cherub; the two cherubim had the same measure and the same fashion.

²⁶ The rise of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was the second cherub. ²⁷ He bestowed the cherubim in the midst of the inner House, so that they spread out the wings of the cherubim. The wing of the one touched the one sidewall, and the wing of the second cherub was touching the second sidewall, while their wings were toward the middle of the House and touching wing to wing. ²⁸ And he overlaid the cherubim with gold.

²⁹ Over all the sidewalls in the House round about he embossed engraved embossings of cherubim, palm trees and open blossoms, on the inside and the outside of the sanctuary; ³⁰ also the floor of the House he overlaid with gold, inside and outside; ³¹ and for the portal of the innermost sanctuary he made doors of oil-tree wood, the pillar jambs being pentagonal.

³² The two doors were of oil-tree wood; he embossed on them embossings of cherubim, palm trees and open blossoms; and he overlaid them with gold, hammering the gold down on the cherubim and on the palm trees.

with 600 talents of good gold. ⁹ The weight of the gold for the nails was fifty shekels; only their upper parts [of the nails] he overspread with gold.

¹⁰ Then, inside the holy of holies, he made two cherubim in sculpted workmanship, and he overlaid them with gold.

¹¹ As for the wings of the cherubim, their length was twenty cubits, the one wing of five cubits touching the sidewall of the House, and the other wing of five cubits touching the wing of the other cherub.

¹² And the wing of the other cherub of five cubits was touching the sidewall of the House, while the other wing of five cubits was clinging to the wing of the other cherub.

¹³ The wings of these cherubim were spread out twenty cubits, and they were standing on their feet with their faces inward.

¹⁴ He also made the curtain of blue wool, purple and vermillion and fine linen, and he set up cherubim on it. [end text]

1 Kings 6:22, 2 Chronicles 3:6. The entire inside of the Holy of Holies was overlaid with a thin gold foil. Gold is extremely malleable and can be beaten and molded to a very thin foil.

The cherubim represent spiritual beings that are alive at this moment. Read Dr. Martin's surprising article "[Lingering Idolatry in the Temple of God](#)." These cherubim have access to God's presence.

1 Kings 6:23. The cherubim were huge, "each ten cubits in its rise" which means it was 15 feet from the base of the wood sculpture to the top of the one wing pointing up. A cubit is roughly 18 inches or 1.5 feet, so ten cubits = 15 feet.

TEXT: The Temple Is Finished

1 Kings 6:33–38

³³ So also he made for the portal of the nave jambs of oil-tree wood from squared logs.

³⁴ The two doors were of fir-tree wood: The two leaves of the one door on pivots, and the two leaves of the second door on pivots. ³⁵ He embossed on them cherubim, palm trees and open blossoms and overlaid them with gold evenly over the delineation.

³⁶ He was also building the inner court with three rows of trimmed stone and a row of cedar beams.

³⁷ In the fourth year the foundation was laid for the House of Yahweh in the month of Ziv; ³⁸ in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul (it is the eighth month), he finished the House in all its details and according to all its specifications. So he had been building it for seven years. [end text]

Verse 33–34. The doorframe is made of oil-tree wood, probably olive tree wood, while the doors are made from fir-tree wood.

Verses 35. The carved designs of living beings and plants are overlaid with gold, as the New American Standard translation makes clear: **“he overlaid them with gold evenly applied on the engraved work.”**

Verses 37–38. The date of the laying of the foundation is repeated, but now the date of its completion is added. Then it states that time building the Temple was 7 years. This indicates that the time it took to construct the Temple is inclusive. This means that a portion of a period of time, such as a part of a year, is counted as an entire year. See the comment on 1 Kings 6:1 above. **“The month of Bul”** is roughly mid-October to mid-November.

First Kings chapter 6 begins and ends giving precise dates, yet we do not yet understand when that was.

TEXT: Construction of Solomon’s Palace

1 Kings 7:1–12

¹ As for his own house, Solomon built it in thirteen years, and he finished his entire house: ² He was building the Lebanon wildwood house, a hundred cubits in its length, fifty cubits in its width and thirty cubits in its rise, on four rows of cedar columns with cedar beams upon the columns.

³ It was ceiled with cedar above on the angular planks which rested on the forty-five columns, fifteen in a row. ⁴ There were three rows of [clerestory] windows, aperture facing aperture, in three tiers. ⁵ All the openings and the apertures had squared window-frames, aperture opposite to aperture, in three tiers.

⁶ He made the portico of columns fifty cubits in its length and thirty cubits in its width, the portico adjoining them with columns and a thick canopy adjoining them. ⁷ He made the portico of the throne where he would judge, the portico of judgment; it was ceiled with cedar from the floor unto the rafters.

⁸ His house where he dwelt, in the court back of the house adjoining to the portico, it was like this one in workmanship. Solomon also made a house like this portico for the daughter of Pharaoh whom he had taken as wife. ⁹ All these were built of quality blocks of stone, according to measures trimmed, sawed with the saw inside and outside, from the foundation unto the coping, and outside as far as the great court.

¹⁰ The foundation was of quality stones, blocks of large stone, stones of ten cubits and stones of eight cubits. ¹¹ Above were quality stones, trimmed according to measures, and cedar.

¹² The great court had round about three rows of trimmed stone and a row of cedar beams. So had the inner court of the House of Yahweh and the portico of the House. [end text]

In ancient times, being a great builder was expected of a great king. The narrative regarding the Temple’s construction is interrupted by 12 verses about construction of Solomon’s palace. Why the insertion? It was to show that the Temple had priority over Solomon’s slower personal projects.

King Hiram previously helped David construct his palace. It was probably one reason for their friendship (1 Kings 5:1), so it was likely the same Hiram, perhaps more than 20 years older than Solomon.

“Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar timber, carpenters and sidewall masons who built a palace for David.”

• **2 Samuel 5:11**

The same words given in a different order are presented in 1 Chronicles 14:1.¹ Hiram’s help involved wood and personnel and it says they **“built”** the palace for David. David’s palace was built in Jerusalem some 30+ years before Solomon was born, soon after David moved from Hebron to Jerusalem.

Perhaps David’s palace was not large enough or sufficiently elegant for Solomon and his many court officials, workers, and the many visitors who came from all over the world. The descriptions in these 12 verses are precise and include measurements, but it is still difficult for me to visualize this structure. And Solomon’s palace took six years longer than the construction of the Temple. The Temple and the palace were just two of Solomon’s building projects.

Verses 1–8. Solomon’s house was a complex of five buildings, well explained by James Smith:

“1. The house of the forest of Lebanon (7:2–5). This building received its name because it contained a virtual forest of cedar pillars. This huge building 150’ by 75’ seems to have served as a treasury and armory. Possibly it also served as the residence of the royal bodyguard (cf. 1 Kgs 10:17; Isa 22:8).

2. The porch [portico] of pillars (7:6). The porch of pillars was no doubt a covered colonnade, i.e., it had a roof but no sides. It connected the house of the forest of Lebanon and the hall of justice. Litigants probably waited here until called to present their case before the king.

3. The hall of justice (7:7). This building was open in the front, and shut in by solid walls on the other three sides. It was covered with cedar. Here the king held court and granted audiences.

4. The palace (7:8a). The hall of justice served as the principal entrance into the king’s personal residence. Little is known of this structure except that it was within a courtyard, and it was built on the same order as the hall of justice.

5. House of Pharaoh’s daughter (7:8b). The queen’s private residence seems to have been directly behind the palace.”

• **“1 Kgs 7:2–8,” Smith, *The Books of History***

All these buildings are at the top of the City of David with the Temple above the Gihon and the other buildings to the south of the Temple.

Verse 7. Solomon had a special throne made for his judgments, the details are described in later chapters (1 Kings 10:18–20; 2 Chronicles 9:17–19).

Verse 8. Solomon’s palace seems to have been built near to or adjoining the outer wall of the Temple on the south. A house somewhat similar was built for Solomon’s wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, probably further south of his house — his and her houses, how nice!

James Smith noted that the Temple was finished much faster than Solomon’s palace complex. First, Solomon’s father David made immense preparations and gathered much of what was needed for the construction. Second, skilled laborers worked exclusively on the Temple, and they likely had the sense of performing a sacred duty. Third, the palace complex of five major buildings was a greater project in scope than the Temple, although no expense was spared for the highest quality used to build the Temple.^m

David Sielaff, April 2016

¹ See [“Israel and Judah: 3. David, Philistines, and Uzzah”](#) to read the two texts side-by-side.

^m “1 Ki 7:1–12,” James Smith, *The Books of History*.