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Israel and Judah: 18. Temple Interior and Dedication

by David Sielaff, June 2016

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Israel and Judah: 18

Temple
Interior and
Dedication

THE SITUATION: The narratives of the description of the interior of God's Temple built by Solomon, and the accounts of his dedication of that Temple, are presented in the books of 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles. There were reasons the descriptions were so detailed. Like the details given to Moses for the construction of the tabernacle, the pattern of the Temple and its manufacture was given to Solomon by his father King David, who received those details in God's own handwriting (1 Chronicles 28:19). Every indication is that Solomon followed God's pattern precisely.

First, I must repeat the verses of 1 Kings 7:13–14 and 2 Chronicles 2:13–14 for context, because a remarkable individual apparently designed much of the interior as indicated in God's specifications given to David. This individual was an Israelite on his mother's side, as patrimony was (and is still) determined.

TEXT: Hiram the Master Artist, also Known as Hiram-Abi

1 Kings 7:13–14

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.

2 Chronicles 2:13–14

¹³ *"I now send you Hiram-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." [end text]*

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 Hiram.^a

1 Kings 7:14 and 2 Chronicles 2:13. It was felt necessary to explain how this man from Tyre could be allowed to work on the Israelite Temple. Hiram's parentage seems confused, but a simple explanation is possible. Hiram's mother was born in the territory allotted to the Israelite tribe of Dan [**"from the daughters of Dan"**] and she married a man from the tribe of Naphtali who died [**"a widowed woman from the stock of Naphtali"**]. She later married a man from 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. Hiram is as skilled a craftsman as those who did the detailed work on the Tabernacle (Exodus 31:1–11; 35:30).

We pick up the story beginning with 1 Kings 7:15, follow the sequence in First Kings, which is different from that of Second Chronicles. (Compare the Concordant Literal Version with your favorite translation):

TEXT: Accessories of the Temple 1

1 Kings 7:15–26

¹⁵ He cast the two columns of bronze; eighteen cubits in rise was the one column,

and a thread of twelve cubits went around it. Its thickness was four fingers; it was hollow, and so was the second column.

¹⁶ He made two capitals to set on the heads of the columns, cast of bronze. Five cubits was the rise of the one capital, and five cubits was the rise of the second capital.

¹⁷ He then made two meshings of meshwork [latticework of threads] with festoons of braidwork for the capitals that were on top of the columns; seven for the one capital and seven for the second capital. ¹⁸ He also made the pomegranates, two rows round about on the one meshing to cover the capitals that were on top of the columns; and he did the same for the second capital.

¹⁹ The capitals that were on top of the columns at the portico, were of anemone [lilly-like] workmanship, of four cubits; ²⁰ so also the capitals upon the two columns extended above, to match the belly-shaped part that was next to the meshing. There were two hundred pomegranates in rows round about, on the doubled capital.

²¹ He set up the columns for the portico of the temple; he set up the right column and called its name Jachin, and he set up the left column and called its name Boaz.

²² On top of the columns there was anemone [lilly-

2 Chronicles 3:15–4:5

¹⁵ Then he made before the House two columns, 35 cubits in length, and the column cap that was on top of it was five cubits.

¹⁶ He made braids in the innermost sanctuary. He also put them on top of the columns.

And he made a hundred pomegranates and put them in the braids.

¹⁷ He set up the columns on the facade of the Temple, one to the right and one to the left; and he called the name of the right one Jachin and the name of the left one Boaz.

^a This is discussed in "[Israel and Judah: 17. Solomon's Early Reign.](#)"

like] workmanship. Thus the work of the columns was being finished.

²³ He made the sea of cast metal, ten cubits from its one lip unto its other lip, circular round about; five cubits was its rise, and a measuring tape of thirty-three cubits would surround it round about.

²⁴ There were colocynth gourds beneath its lip round about, surrounding it, ten in a cubit, encompassing the sea round about, with two rows of colocynth gourds cast in its casting.

²⁵ It was standing on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south and three facing east. The sea was above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward.

²⁶ Its thickness was a handbreadth; its lip was like the workmanship of the lip of a cup, like anemone petals. It contained two thousand bath measures.

¹ Then he made the copper altar, its length twenty cubits, its width twenty cubits, and ten cubits its rise.

² He made the sea of cast metal, ten cubits from its one lip to its other lip, circular round about; five cubits was its rise, and a measuring tape of thirty cubits would surround it round about.

³ Beneath it was the likeness of oxen, surrounding it all around, ten in a cubit, encompassing the sea round about; the oxen were in two rows, cast in one casting with it.

⁴ It was standing on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south and three facing east. The sea was above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward.

⁵ Its thickness was a handbreadth, and its lip was like the workmanship of the lip of a cup, like anemone petals. Filled to capacity it would contain 3,000 bath measures. [end text]

Verses 15 and 15. I cannot explain the discrepancy between the two measures.

Verses 21 and 17, respectively (corresponding verses from 1 Kings and then 2 Chronicles). What is the purpose of the columns? No one is sure, nor is their purpose understood. Their positioning next to the entrance of the Holy Place where only Priests could enter, suggest a reference back to the cherubim guarding the entrance of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23–24). Beyond that connection, nothing is certain. Again, the measurement discrepancy has no easy explanation.

Verses 23 and 2. The “sea” to hold water was cast in bronze and it was large, holding more than 11,500 gallons.^b **“The sea was for the priests to wash in it”** (2 Chronicles 4:6 below) meaning to wash their hands. It was where the priests could symbolically cleanse themselves before and after their sacrificial duties.

Verses 24 and 3. The texts could be describing two different decorations around the “sea.”

Verses 25 and 4. These verses correspond precisely. The next section occurs only in 1 Kings chapter 7.

TEXT: Accessories of the Temple 2

1 Kings 7:27–37

²⁷ He made the ten bases of bronze; four cubits was the length of each base, four cubits its width and three cubits its rise.²⁸ This was the workmanship of the bases: They had insets, and the insets were between the cross-pieces.²⁹ On the insets that were between the cross-pieces there were lions, oxen and cherubim. On the cross-pieces was a post. Above and beneath the lions and the oxen were wreaths of descending workmanship.^c

³⁰ There were four wheels of bronze for each base, with axles of bronze and its four footings. They had shoulders beneath the laver, the shoulders having been cast with wreaths across from each.³¹ Its mouth was inside the capital, and extended upward one cubit; its mouth was round, the workmanship of a post, a cubit

^b Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, vol. 8, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 133.

^c Each of these 10 basins held 230 gallons. Paul House, *1, 2 Kings*, 134.

and half a cubit; besides there were embossings around its mouth. Their insets were squared, not round.

³² The four wheels were beneath the insets; and the axletrees of the wheels were in the base. The rise of each wheel was a cubit and half a cubit. ³³ The workmanship of the wheels was like the workmanship of a chariot wheel. Their axletrees and their rims, their spokes and their hubs, they were all cast.

³⁴ There were four shoulders on the four faces of each base; its shoulders extended from the base. ³⁵ On top of the base was a round piece, half a cubit in rise, round about. On top of the base were its axletrees and its insets extending from it. ³⁶ He engraved on the planks of its sides and on its insets, cherubim, lions and palm trees according to the empty space of each, with wreaths round about. ³⁷ After this manner he made the ten bases; all of them had the same casting, the same measure, the same fashion. [end text]

Verses 30–32. The manufacture of the wheels is elaborately described, perhaps because they were likely unique in their time. They looked like chariot wheels but were cast in solid bronze, strong enough to hold the weight of the cart and water. The wheels had a diameter of 1½ cubits. A cubit was about 18 inches, so 1½ cubits = 27 inches. Each base was attached to 4 wheels. A laver was attached to the base.

TEXT: Accessories of the Temple 3

1 Kings 7:38–51

³⁸ He also made ten lavers of bronze. Each laver contained forty bath measures; each laver measured four cubits; there was one laver on each base, for the ten bases.

³⁹ He put five bases on the right flank of the House and five on its left flank for the House;

and

he put the sea on the right flank of the House, eastward, toward the south. ⁴⁰ Finally Hiram made the pots, the shovels and the sprinkling bowls.

Thus Hiram finished doing all the work that he had undertaken for king Solomon on the House of Yahweh: ⁴¹ The two columns, the globes of the capitals that were on top of the two columns, and the two meshings for covering the two globes of the capitals that were on top of the columns; ⁴² the 400 pomegranates for the two meshings, two rows of pomegranates for each meshing to cover the two globes of the capitals that were overlooking the columns; ⁴³ the ten bases and the ten lavers on the

2 Chronicles 4:6–5:1

⁶ He also made ten lavers *and*

put five *to the right* and five *to the left, to wash in them; they rinsed out in them the implements for the ascent offering; but the sea was for the priests to wash in it.*

⁷ *He made the ten lampstands of gold according to their ordinance and put them in the nave, five at the right side and five at the left.*

⁸ *He also made ten tables and left them in the nave, five at the right side and five at the left, and he made a hundred sprinkling bowls of gold.*

⁹ *He made the court of the priests, the great outer court and the doors for the outer court; he overlaid their doors with bronze.*

¹⁰ He put the sea on the right flank of the Houses, eastward, toward the south. ¹¹ Finally *Huram* made the pots, the shovels and the sprinkling bowls.

Thus *Huram* finished doing all the work that he had undertaken for king Solomon on the House of *the One, Elohim*: ¹² The two columns, the globes *and* the capitals on top of the two columns; and the two meshings for covering the two globes of the capitals that were on top of the columns; ¹³ the 400 pomegranates for the two meshings, two rows of pomegranates for each meshing to cover the two globes of the capitals that were overlooking the columns; ¹⁴ the ten bases and the ten lavers on the

bases; ⁴⁴ the one sea and the twelve oxen beneath the sea; ⁴⁵ the pots, the shovels, the sprinkling bowls and all these utensils that Hiram made of burnished bronze for king Solomon for the House of Yahweh. ⁴⁶ In the basin of the Jordan the king had them cast in clay molds of the ground between Succoth and Zarethan.

⁴⁷ Solomon left all the utensils unweighed because of the very excess of their abundance. The weight of the copper was not investigated.

⁴⁸ Solomon had all the utensils made for the House of Yahweh: The altar of gold and the table on which was the bread of the presence, of gold; ⁴⁹ the lampstands of plated gold, five at the right side and five at the left, before the innermost sanctuary; and the petals and the lamps and the tongs, of gold; ⁵⁰ the basins, the snippers [shears], the sprinkling bowls, the spoons and the firepans, of plated gold; the hinge sockets for the doors of the inner House, for the holy of holies, for the double doors of the nave of the House, all of gold.

⁵¹ When all the work that king Solomon had done for the House of Yahweh, was accomplished, Solomon brought in the hallowed things of his father David; the silver and the gold and the utensils he put among the treasures of the House of Yahweh.

bases; ¹⁵ the one sea and the twelve oxen beneath it; ¹⁶ the pots, the shovels, *the forks* and all these utensils that Huram-abi made of *scoured* bronze for king Solomon for the House of Yahweh. ¹⁷ In the basin of the Jordan the king had them cast in *the thick mud* of the ground between Succoth and Zarethan.

¹⁸ Solomon *made* all these utensils *in very great quantity*, so that the weight of the copper was not investigated.

¹⁹ Solomon had all the utensils made for the House of *the One, Elohim*: the altar of gold and the tables with the bread of the presence *on them*; ²⁰ the lampstands *and their lamps* of plated gold, *to blaze them up, according to the ordinance*, before the innermost sanctuary; ²¹ and the petals and the lamps and the tongs of gold; *this was solid gold*; ²² the snippers [shears], the sprinkling bowls, the spoons and the firepans of plated gold; *the portal of the House, its inner doors to the holy of holies and the double doors of the nave of the House, all of gold.*

¹ When all the work that Solomon had done for the House of Yahweh was accomplished, Solomon brought in the hallowed things of his father David; *and* the silver and the gold and *all* the utensils he put among the treasures of the House of *the One, Elohim*. [end text]

Verses 40–47 and 11–18. The work that Hiram did was a remarkable artistic achievement. Five years after Solomon died all these marvelously tooled implements were looted and seized by “**Shishak, king of Egypt**,” who invaded Israel and captured Jerusalem (1 Kings 14:25–26; 2 Chronicles 12:2–9).

Verses 46 and 17. “**The basin of the Jordan**” means they were cast somewhere in the Jordan River valley. “Succoth and Zarethan” are locations mentioned in Joshua 13:27. Succoth is east of the Jordan River, the location of Zarethan is not precisely known, but it was near where Joshua led Israel across the Jordan River. The “mud” must have had special properties to effectively mold the various brass items Hiram designed for the Temple.

Verses 51 and 1. The “**hallowed things**” are valuable items obtained by King David in his many conquests and were thanksgiving artifacts to memorialize God’s care and love for David and Israel (2 Samuel 8:11; 1 Chronicles 22:14).

If you desire more information about what these various implements were and how they were used, look at Alfred Edersheim’s book *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Jesus Christ*. It is available on many websites and in many formats on the internet. Although the title says “at the time of Jesus Christ,” most all the implements were the same in the time of Solomon.

Solomon Dedicates the Temple to YHWH

This next long section is a restatement of the theology of Israel’s covenant with God. It begins with details about bringing the ark of the Covenant up to the Temple. The sacrifices made on this special day are

described. Then Solomon speaks to the crowd and tells of God's greatness. He addresses YHWH on behalf of himself and God's covenant people. Solomon makes requests of YHWH on behalf of himself as ruler, on behalf of the people, and even on behalf of foreigners who acknowledge YHWH, His lordship over man, and the Temple YHWH had Solomon build.

It is important to understand the size of the Solomonic Temple. An ancient author named Hecateus [alternately spelled Hecataeus], during the time of Alexander the Great around 333–323 BC, wrote about the size of the temple sanctuary and its environs. Hecateus lived some 600 years after Solomon's Temple was built and some 250 years after it was destroyed. How did he know what the original size was? He knew because the returning exiles from Babylon after 70 years of exile rebuilt the Temple to the same dimensions.

While Hecateus' writings are lost to us, the Jewish historian Josephus gives us information from documents available to him in his day, sources such as from Temple documents kept by the priests (Josephus was a priest), and Herod's court records, were all given to him by the Roman emperors.

“Again, here is his [Hecateus'] description of Jerusalem itself, the city which we have inhabited from remote ages, of its great beauty and extent, its numerous population, and the temple buildings:

‘The Jews have many fortresses and villages ..., but only one fortified city, which has a circumference of about fifty stades and some hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants; they call it Jerusalem. Nearly in the centre of the city stands a stone wall [of the Temple], enclosing an area about five plethra long [500 feet] and a hundred cubits broad [150 feet], approached by a pair of gates.

Within this enclosure [a rectangle] is a square altar, built of heaped up stones, unhewn and unwrought; each side is twenty cubits [30 feet] long and the height ten cubits [15 feet]. Beside it stands a great edifice, containing an altar and a lampstand, both made of gold, and weighing two talents [96 pounds].”

• **Josephus, Against Apion 1:197–199^d**

Hecateus saw that Temple in his day and in a book he wrote about the Jews, commented as an eyewitness of the Temple as he saw it, including measurements. Josephus tells us about Hecateus^e:

“Hecataeus of Abdera, at once a philosopher and a highly competent man of affairs, who rose to fame under King Alexander [Alexander the Great], and was afterwards associated with Ptolemy [who became the second Greek king of Egypt after Alexander], son of Lagus. He makes no mere passing allusion to us, but wrote a book entirely about the Jews, from which I propose briefly to touch on some passages.”

• **Josephus, Against Apion 1:183^f**

So Hecateus traveled with Alexander and with Ptolemy, the general of Alexander who claimed and seized Egypt as his possession after Alexander's death.

King Herod's Temple was a much enlarged version of Solomon's Temple in total area, 600 x 600 feet, or one stade on each side (compare Josephus, *Wars of the Jews* 5.190–200, 6.161–168, 6.310–316, and *Antiquities of the Jews* 15.317–322).^g

Below we read Solomon's dedication speech to the people of Israel. They are encouraged to strictly keep their Covenant with YHWH. When the last ending sacrifices and oration are given, YHWH responds with a miraculous show of power. He accepts their sacrifices with fire and a cloud of smoke from heaven

^d Josephus, *The Life, Against Apion*, ed. T.E. Page et al., trans. H.J. Thackeray, vol. I, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd; Harvard University Press, 1966), 243.

^e “[New Evidence for the Site of the Temple in Jerusalem](#)” and read the entire story in [The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot](#) both by Dr. Ernest Martin.

^f Josephus, *The Life, Against Apion*, trans. H.J. Thackeray, 237.

^g Martin, “[New Evidence for the Site of the Temple in Jerusalem](#).”

showing His love for His people. Unfortunately that situation will change as the people sin and seek other gods. Nevertheless, looking back in Israel's history, it was a time of joy, prosperity, and God's favor.

TEXT: Solomon Assembles the People and Installs the Ark in the Temple

1 Kings 8:1–9 [with Psalms 136:1]

¹ Then Solomon assembled all the elders of Israel, all the heads of the stocks, the patriarchal princes of the sons of Israel to king Solomon at Jerusalem to bring up the coffer [ark] of the covenant of Yahweh from the city of David, that is, Zion.

² All the men of Israel were assembled to king Solomon for the festival in the month of Ethanim, that is, the seventh month. ³ When all the elders of Israel had come, the priests carried the coffer [ark], ⁴ and they brought up the coffer [ark] of Yahweh and the tent of appointment and all the hallowed utensils that were in the tent; the priests and the Levites brought them up, ⁵ while king Solomon and the whole congregation of Israel, all those congregated to him, were with him before the coffer [ark], making sacrifices of the flock and of the herd that could not be numbered and not be counted for multitude.

⁶ Then the priests brought the coffer [ark] of the covenant of Yahweh to its place, to the innermost sanctuary of the House, the holy of holies, underneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁷ For the cherubim were spreading out their wings over the place of the coffer [ark], so that the cherubim provided a screen over the coffer [ark] and over its poles from above.

⁸ Yet the poles struck out, so that the ends of the poles could be seen from the holy place adjoining the innermost sanctuary, but they were not seen from the outside. There they are unto this day.

⁹ There was nothing in the coffer [ark] but the two stone tablets that Moses had left to be there at Horeb when Yahweh had contracted with the sons of Israel at their coming forth from the land of Egypt.

2 Chronicles 5:2–10

² Then Solomon assembled all the elders of Israel *and* all the heads of the stocks, the patriarchal princes of the sons of Israel at Jerusalem to bring up the coffer [ark] of the covenant of Yahweh from the city of David, that is, Zion.

³ All the men of Israel were assembled to the king for the festival; it was in the seventh month. ⁴ When all the elders of Israel had come, the *Levites* carried the coffer [ark], ⁵ and they brought up the coffer [ark] and the tent of appointment and all the hallowed utensils that were in the tent; the priests and the Levites brought them up, ⁶ while king Solomon and the whole congregation of Israel, all those congregated to him, were before the coffer [ark], making sacrifices of the flock and of the herd that could not be numbered and not be counted for multitude.

⁷ Then the priests brought the coffer [ark] of the covenant of Yahweh to its place, to the innermost sanctuary of the House, the holy of holies, underneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁸ The cherubim were spreading out their wings over the place of the coffer [ark], so that the cherubim *kept* the coffer [ark] and its poles covered from above.

⁹ Yet the poles stuck out, so that the ends of the poles could be seen from the holy *places* adjoining the innermost sanctuary, but they were not seen from the outside. There they are unto this day.

¹⁰ There was nothing in the coffer [ark] but the two tablets that Moses had placed there at Horeb when Yahweh had contracted with the sons of Israel at their coming forth from Egypt. **[end text]**

Verses 1 and 2. The ark was in the tabernacle of David down at the Gihon Spring, where Solomon was anointed with oil as successor king to David (1 Kings 1:33–38). They brought the ark up to the top of the hill immediately above the Gihon Spring. The Temple is in the City of David in Zion.

Verses 3 and 4. First Kings 8:3 says priests (all priests were descended from Aaron, who was a Levite) while 2 Chronicles 5:4 says Levites. Why the difference? Levites were allowed to carry the ark (Deuteronomy 31:9), but this carry to the holy of holies required the priests with the greatest degree of holiness.

Verses 4 and 5. “**Tent of appointment**” is familiarly termed “**tent of meeting**” in the King James Version, but it likely refers to the tent King David built to hold the ark down near the Gihon Spring (2 Chronicles 1:4). Apparently the tent of meeting in 1 Chronicles chapter 1 was not moved to Jerusalem.

“The ark of the Lord’s covenant was a box in which the Israelites kept the stone tablets on which God had inscribed the Ten Commandments (v. 10). Made of wood and covered with gold, it measured about 45 inches long by 27 inches wide and 27 inches deep (Exodus 25:10–16). The ark was more than a storage chest, however. Upon its cover were two cherubim (heavenly beings ...) elaborately made of gold, and between the cherubim was the special place of God’s presence. From that place he spoke to his servant Moses (Exodus 25:17–22).”^h

God symbolically sat upon it as his throne which was the box, the ark.

Verses 6–7 and 7–8. No one really knows what the cherubim looked like. They had some human aspects, but they had wings. The size and wingspan is given, but no useful description is given here.

Verses 8 and 9. The poles stuck out from the holy of holies into the holy place where the priests officiated. The poles could not be seen outside the holy place.

TEXT: Solomon Addresses the People for the Dedication

1 Kings 8:10–21 [with Psalms 136:1]

¹⁰ It came to be when the priests came forth from the holy place,

[*Psalms 136:1*]

¹ **“Give acclamation to Yahweh, for He is good, For His benignity is eonian”;**

[*continuing 1 Kings 8:10b–21*] that the cloud itself filled the House of Yahweh.

¹¹ The priests were unable to stay and minister because of the cloud, for the glory of Yahweh filled the House of Yahweh.

¹² Then Solomon stated: **“Yahweh Himself has said He was to tabernacle in murkiness. ¹³ I have built, yea built a House, a residence for You, a site for You to dwell in for the eons.”**

¹⁴ Now the king turned his face around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel while the whole assembly of Israel was standing. ¹⁵ He said,

“Blessed be Yahweh Elohim of Israel, Who spoke

2 Chronicles 5:11–6:11

¹¹ It came to be when the priests came forth from the holy place — *for all the priests who had converged here had sanctified themselves without keeping to the set apportionments* — ¹² *and the Levites who were singers belonging to all of them, to Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and to their sons and their brothers, clothed in fine linen, standing with cymbals and zithers and harps to the east of the altar, and with them were 120 priests blowing the bugles.*

¹³ *And buglers and singers were in unison to make one sound heard, to praise and acclaim Yahweh. And as they raised up their voice with the bugles and the cymbals and the instruments of song, and with praising Yahweh, saying: “For He is good, For His benignity is for the eon,”*

then the House was filled with a cloud, the glory of Yahweh.

¹⁴ The priests were unable to stay and minister because of the cloud; for the glory of Yahweh filled the House of the One, Elohim.

[*2 Chronicles 6:1–11*]

¹ Then Solomon stated: **“Yahweh Himself has said He was to tabernacle in murkiness. ² And I, for my part, have built a House, a residence for You, a site for You to dwell in for the eons.”**

³ Now the king turned his face around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel while the whole assembly of Israel was standing. ⁴ He said,

“Blessed be Yahweh Elohim of Israel, Who spoke

^h Douglas Redford, *The History of Israel*, vol. 2, Standard Reference Library: Old Testament (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 2008), 154.

with His mouth to my father David and fulfilled it with His hand, saying,

¹⁶ ‘From the day on which I brought forth My people Israel from Egypt, I have not chosen a city from all the tribes of Israel to build a House that My Name be there;

but I chose Jerusalem that My Name be there, and I chose David that he be over My people Israel.’

¹⁷ It came to be on the heart of my father David to build a House for the Name of Yahweh Elohim of Israel. ¹⁸ Yet Yahweh said to my father David,

‘Inasmuch as it was on your heart to build a House for My Name, you did well that it came to be on your heart. ¹⁹ But you shall not build the House, but rather your son who is coming forth from your loins, he shall build the House for My Name.’

²⁰ Now Yahweh has carried out His word that He had spoken; for I have risen in place of my father David, and I am sitting on the throne of Israel, just as Yahweh had spoken; and I have built the House for the Name of Yahweh Elohim of Israel; ²¹ and there I have provided a place for the coffer [ark] wherein the covenant of Yahweh is that He contracted with our fathers when He brought them forth from the land of Egypt.”

with His mouth to my father David and fulfilled it with His hands, saying,

⁵ ‘From the day on which I brought forth My people Israel from *the land of* Egypt, I have not chosen a city from all the tribes of Israel to build a House that My Name be there; *nor have I chosen anyone to become governor over My people Israel.* ⁶ But I chose Jerusalem that My Name be there, and I chose David that he be over My people Israel.’

⁷ It came to be on the heart of my father David to build a House for the Name of Yahweh Elohim of Israel. ⁸ Yet Yahweh said to my father David,

‘Inasmuch as it was on your heart to build a House for My Name, you did well that it came to be on your heart. ⁹ But you shall not build the House, but rather your son who is coming forth from your loins, he shall build the House for My Name.’

¹⁰ Now Yahweh has carried out His word that He had spoken; for I have risen in place of my father David, and I am sitting on the throne of Israel, just as Yahweh had spoken; and I have built the House for the Name of Yahweh Elohim of Israel; ¹¹ and there I have set the coffer [ark] wherein the covenant of Yahweh is that He contracted with *the sons of Israel.*”

[end text]

Verse 1 Kings 8:10. The author inserts an acclamation quote from Psalm 136:1.

Verses 10–11 and 11–14. The construction and bringing the ark to the Temple, singing and praise of YHWH, all were acknowledged when YHWH’s glory “filled the House.” The priests stopped sacrificing. God wants obedience and not sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 51:17; Proverbs 21:3; Hosea 6:6).

Verses 12 and 6:1. Solomon recognizes God’s acceptance of Israel’s faithful actions.

Verses 15 and 5-6. Solomon quotes YHWH’s words to His faithfulness toward David and Israel.

Verses 20–21 and 10–11. YHWH fulfilled His promises, Solomon sits on David’s throne, he has built the Temple, and the ark has been placed in the holy of holies.

In the next section note how many times Solomon begs God to “hearken” to the distress pleas of Israel.

TEXT: Solomon’s Prays to YHWH

1 Kings 8:22–53; Psalm 132:8–10, 1

²² Then Solomon stood before the altar of Yahweh in front of the whole assembly of Israel;

he spread out his palms to the heavens

2 Chronicles 6:12–42

¹² Then he stood before the altar of Yahweh in front of the whole assembly of Israel, *and he spread out his palms.* ¹³ *For Solomon had made a platform of bronze and had placed it in the midst of the outer court. Its length was five cubits, its width five cubits, and its rise three cubits. He stood on it and knelt on his knees in front of the whole assembly of Israel;*

he spread out his palms to the heavens

Note: [Texts of 1 Kings 8:23–30 and 2 Chronicles 6:14–21 are identical and in a single column]

^{23 (14)} and said, “O Yahweh Elohim of Israel, there is no elohim like You in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, keeping the covenant and the benignity toward Your servants who are walking before You with all their heart, ^{24 (15)} You Who have kept with your servant David, my father, what You spoke to him. You spoke with Your mouth, and You fulfilled with Your hand, as on this day.

^{25 (16)} And now, O Yahweh Elohim of Israel, keep with Your servant David, my father, what You spoke to him, saying,

‘There shall not be cut off a man of yours from before Me, to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your sons should keep their way to walk before Me just as you have walked before Me.’

^{26 (17)} And now, O Yahweh Elohim of Israel, I pray, let Your word come true that You have spoken to Your servant David, my father.

^{27 (18)} Will Elohim truly dwell with mankind on the earth? Behold, the heavens and the heavens of the heavens themselves cannot contain You; how much less, indeed, this House that I have built!

^{28 (19)} Yet You will turn toward the prayer of Your servant and to his supplication, O Yahweh my Elohim, to hearken to the appeal and to the prayer that Your servant is praying before You today.

^{29 (20)} O that Your eyes be open toward this House night and day, toward the place of which You promised: My Name shall be there, to hearken to the prayer that Your servant is praying toward this place.

^{30 (21)} You will hearken to the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place; and You Yourself shall hearken from Your dwelling place from the heavens; and when You hearken, You will pardon.

[Returning to double columns with text differences]

1 Kings 8:31–53; Psalm 132:8-10, 1

³¹ When a man sins against his associate who loads on him an oath of imprecation to imprecate him, and he comes with his oath of imprecation before Your altar in this House, ³² then may You Yourself hearken from the heavens, and You will act and judge Your servants, so as to condemn the wicked, to bring his way on his own head and to justify the just, to give to him according to his righteousness.

³³ When Your people Israel are struck before an enemy, because they were sinning against You, and they return to You and acclaim Your Name and pray and supplicate to You in this House, ³⁴ then may You Yourself hearken from the heavens, and You will pardon the sin of Your people Israel, and You will restore them to the ground that You gave to their fathers.

³⁵ When the heavens are restrained and there is no rain because they were sinning against You, and they pray toward this place and acclaim Your Name and turn back from their sin because You made them humble, ³⁶ then may You Yourself hearken from the heavens, and You will pardon the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel; for You are directing them to the good way in which they should walk; and You will give rain on Your land that You have given as an allotment to Your people.

2 Chronicles 6:22–42

²² If a man sins against his associate who loads on him an oath of imprecation to imprecate him, and he comes with his oath of imprecation before Your altar in this House, ²³ then may You Yourself hearken from the heavens, and You will act and judge Your servants, so as to *pay back* to the wicked, to bring his way on his own head, and to justify the just, to give to him according to his righteousness.

²⁴ When Your people Israel are struck before an enemy because they were sinning against You, and they return and acclaim Your Name and pray and supplicate before You in this House, ²⁵ then may You Yourself hearken from the heavens, and You will pardon the sin of Your people Israel, and You will restore them to the ground that You gave *to them and* to their fathers.

²⁶ When the heavens are restrained and there is no rain because they were sinning against You, and they pray toward this place and acclaim Your Name and turn back from their sin because You made them humble, ²⁷ then may You Yourself hearken from the heavens, and You will pardon the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel; for You are directing them to the good way in which they should walk; and You will give rain on Your land that You have given as an allotment to Your people.

³⁷ In case a famine comes on the land, or a plague comes, or a blast or mildew, in case locusts and beetles come, in case their enemy is distressing them in the land of their gates — any kind of contagion, any illness — ³⁸ in every prayer, every supplication that may occur by any human or by all of Your people Israel, for they know each one the contagion of his own heart, when he spreads out his palms toward this House, ³⁹ then may You Yourself hearken from the heavens, the site of Your dwelling, and You will pardon and act, and You will give to each one according to all his ways since You know his heart — for You Yourself, You alone, know the heart of all the sons of humanity — ⁴⁰ so that they may fear You all the days that they are alive on the surface of the ground that You gave to our fathers.

⁴¹ And also to the foreigner who is not of Your people Israel, he who came from a far country on account of Your Name ⁴² — for they shall hear of Your great Name and Your steadfast hand and Your outstretched arm — when he comes and prays toward this House, ⁴³ to him may You Yourself hearken from the heavens, the site of Your dwelling, and You will act according to all for which the foreigner calls to You; in order that all the peoples of the earth may know Your Name so as to fear You as do Your own people Israel, and know that Your Name has been called over this House that I have built.

⁴⁴ In case Your people go forth to a battle against their enemy, in the way that You send them, and they pray to Yahweh in the direction of the city that You have chosen and toward the House that I have built for Your Name, ⁴⁵ then You will hearken from the heavens to their prayer and their supplication, and You will execute right judgment for them.

⁴⁶ In case they are sinning against You — for there is no human who does not sin — and You are angry with them and give them up before the enemy, so that their captors capture them and bring them to the land of the enemy, far or near, ⁴⁷ yet they turn back their heart in the land where they are captives, so that they return to You and supplicate in the land of their captors, saying, We have sinned, we are depraved, and we are wicked, ⁴⁸ and they return to You with all their heart, and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who had captured them, and they pray to You in the direction of their land that You gave to their fathers, toward the city that You have chosen and the House that I have built

²⁸ In case a famine comes on the land, or a plague comes, or a blast, or mildew, in case locusts and beetles come, in case *his* enemy is distressing *him* in the land of *his* gates — any kind of contagion, any illness — ²⁹ in every prayer, every supplication that may occur by any human or by all of Your people Israel, for they know each one his contagion and his pain, when he spreads out his palms toward this House, ³⁰ then may You Yourself hearken from the heavens, the site of Your dwelling, and You will pardon and give to each one according to all his ways since You know his heart — for You Yourself, You alone, know the heart of the sons of humanity — ³¹ so that they may fear You *and walk in Your ways* all the days that they are alive on the surface of the ground that You gave to our fathers.

³² And also to the foreigner who is not of Your people Israel, he who came from a far country on account of Your Name — for they shall hear of Your great Name and Your steadfast hand and Your outstretched arm — when *they come and pray* toward this House, ³³ to *them* may You Yourself hearken from the heavens, from the site of Your dwelling, and You will act according to all for which the foreigner calls to You; in order that all the peoples of the earth may know Your Name so as to fear You as do Your own people Israel, and know that Your Name has been called over this House that I have built.

³⁴ In case Your people go forth to a battle against their enemies, in the way that You send them, and they pray to *You* in the direction of this city that You have chosen and toward the House that I have built for Your Name, ³⁵ then You will hearken from the heavens to their prayer and their supplication, and You will execute right judgment for them.

³⁶ In case they are sinning against You — for there is no human who does not sin — and You are angry with them, and give them up before the enemy, so that their captors capture them and bring them to the land of the enemy, far or near, ³⁷ yet they turn back their heart in the land where they are captives, so that they return to You and supplicate in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we are depraved, and we are wicked, ³⁸ and they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul, in the land of their *captors* who had captured them, and they pray in the direction of their land that You gave to their fathers *and* toward the city that You have chosen and *toward* the House that I have built

for Your Name,⁴⁹ then You will hearken from the heavens, the site of Your dwelling, to their prayer and their supplication, and You will execute right judgment for them.

⁵⁰ You will pardon Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions with which they transgressed against You; and You will grant them compassion before their captors, so that they have compassion on them ⁵¹ — for they are Your people and Your allotment whom You brought forth from Egypt, from the midst of the iron crucible — ⁵² so that Your eyes and Your ears be open to the supplication of Your servant and to the supplication of Your people Israel by hearkening to them in all their calling to You. ⁵³ For You Yourself separated them to be Your allotment from all the peoples of the earth, just as You spoke by means of Moses Your servant, when You brought forth our fathers from Egypt, O my Lord Yahweh.

[Psalm 132:8–10]

⁸ Do arise, O Yahweh, to Your resting place, You and the coffer [ark] of Your strength. ⁹ Your priests, may they be clothed with righteousness, And Your benign ones, may they be jubilant.

¹⁰ For the sake of David, Your servant, Do not turn back from the face of Your anointed one.

[Psalm 132:1]

¹ Remember, O Yahweh, concerning David, All his humiliation.”

for Your Name,³⁹ then You will hearken from the heavens, from the site of Your dwelling, to their prayer and their supplications, and You will execute right judgment for them, and You will pardon Your people who have sinned against You.

⁴⁰ Now, my Elohim, I pray, may Your eyes be open, and Your ears attentive to the prayer of this place.

⁴¹ And now, Do rise, O Yahweh Elohim, to Your resting place. You and the coffer [ark] of Your strength. Your priests, O Yahweh Elohim, may they be clothed with *salvation*, And Your benign ones, may they *rejoice in Your goodness*.

⁴² O Yahweh, Elohim, do not turn back from the face of Your anointed one;

O do remember *the benignities promised Your servant David*.” [end text]

Verses 31 and 22. To imprecate means to swear, as to swear a curse against someone.

Verse 53. Solomon reminds his subjects that YHWH Himself separated Israel from all the other nations. At that moment Israel was the most powerful nation on earth, and its glory was to increase until the latter part of Solomon’s reign.

Psalm 132:1. What is meant by David’s humiliation? It likely refers to times in David’s life when he was in danger of losing both his kingdom and his life, due to his own sins.

The next two sections are in single columns because they do not relate much at all to each other. Both narratives deal with events that occur after Solomon completes his prayer to YHWH, but they cover radically different subjects.

TEXT: After Solomon’s Prayer, a Blessing, 1 Kings 8

1 Kings 8:54–61

⁵⁴ It came to be as Solomon finished praying to Yahweh with all this prayer and supplication, that he arose from before the altar of Yahweh, from bowing on his knees with his palms spread out to the heavens.

⁵⁵ While he was standing, he blessed the whole assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying,

⁵⁶ “Blessed be Yahweh, Who has given rest to His people Israel according to all that He spoke. Not one thing has fallen short of all His good word which He spoke by means of Moses His servant. ⁵⁷ May Yahweh our Elohim be with us just as He was with our fathers! He must not forsake us and not abandon us, ⁵⁸ so as to cause our heart to stretch out to Him, to walk in all His ways and to keep His instructions, His statutes and His ordinances which He enjoined on our fathers.

⁵⁹ And may these my words with which I have supplicated before Yahweh, be near to Yahweh our Elohim by day and night, so that He may execute right judgment for His servant and right judgment for His people Israel, each matter of a day in its day, ⁶⁰ so that all the peoples of the earth may know that He, Yahweh, is the One, Elohim; and there is no other. ⁶¹ Hence we must be wholehearted with Yahweh our Elohim by walking benignly in His statutes and by keeping His instructions as in this day.” [end text]

Verses 56 to 61. Solomon’s admonition connected the beginning of Israel’s Covenant with YHWH in the time of Moses to the day of the dedication, and encouraged them to wholeheartedly obey YHWH so His blessings will continue for the good of all. (Little did Solomon or the people realize that Solomon would be the one to lead the people astray.)

Verse 60. One of Israel’s responsibilities in their covenant with YHWH is to be a blessing to the nation, fulfilling God’s promise as Abraham’s descendants (Genesis 12:3, 18:18), to be an example of a people dedicated to YHWH as He has dedicated Himself to them — if they obey His commands. Someday, King David prophesied: “**All the limits of the earth shall remember and return to Yahweh; All the families of the nations shall worship before Him.**” (Psalm 22:27). In Solomon’s time, all the nations present (through representatives) to observe the Temple dedication began to “**know that He, YHWH, is the One, Elohim; and there is no other.**”

TEXT: After Solomon’s Prayer, 2 Chronicles 7, God’s Response from Heaven

2 Chronicles 7:1–3

¹ As Solomon finished praying, the fire itself descended from the heavens and devoured the ascent approach and the sacrifices; and Yahweh’s glory itself filled the House. ² The priests were unable to enter the House of Yahweh on that occasion, for the glory of Yahweh filled the House of Yahweh. ³ And all the sons of Israel were watching when [1] the fire descended and [2] the glory of Yahweh was upon the House; and they bowed their brow to the earth, on the pavement, and worshipped and acclaimed Yahweh: For He is good, for His benignity is for the eon. [end text]

Verses 1 and 3. Two supernatural events occurred to indicate YHWH’s pleasure and acceptance of all that was done in Israel’s dedication of the Temple. Fire came from heaven and consumed the sacrifice in a similar manner to Genesis 15:17 in the time of Abram and Leviticus 9:24 in the time of Moses. In verse 3, another wondrous supernatural event occurred when the glory of YHWH came “**upon the House**” as a sign that God’s presence was inside (see 2 Chronicles 5:17 above). These are separate but related events, each having great significance to all observers.

Keep in mind that many leaders and ambassadors from foreign lands were present. This may be one reason Solomon put in an admonition for foreigners in 1 Kings 8:41–43 and 2 Chronicles 6:32–33 above. This means that these events and the accompanying signs were reported to rulers and leaders around the world. The name of YHWH was glorified to the ends of the earth. This event likely marked the beginning of Solomon’s international recognition (1 Kings 10:24). YHWH was at this time an advocate and protector of Solomon and for the kingdom of Israel!

TEXT: Solomon Completes the Temple Dedication

1 Kings 8:62–66

⁶² Then the king and all Israel with him were offering sacrifices before Yahweh. ⁶³ King Solomon offered the sacrifice of peace offerings that he had to sacrifice to Yahweh: 22,000 oxen and 120,000 of the flock. Thus the king and all the sons of Israel dedicated the House of Yahweh.

⁶⁴ On that day the king hallowed the middle part of the court before the House of Yahweh, for there he offered the ascent offering and the approach present and the fat pieces of the peace offerings, because the copper altar that is before Yahweh was too small to contain the ascent offering and the approach present and the fat pieces of the peace offerings.

⁶⁵ Thus Solomon observed the festival at that time, and all Israel with him, a great assembly, coming from Lebo-hamath unto the Wadi of Egypt; they were before Yahweh our Elohim in the House that he had built, eating and drinking and rejoicing before Yahweh our Elohim seven days and seven days, fourteen days.

⁶⁶ On the eighth day

he dismissed the people; and they blessed the king as they went to their tents, rejoicing and cheerful of heart over all the goodness that Yahweh had shown to David His servant and to His people Israel.

2 Chronicles 7:4–10

⁴ Then the king and all *the people* were offering sacrifices before Yahweh. ⁵ King Solomon offered the sacrifice of the oxen, 22,000, and 120,000 of the flock. Thus the king and all the people dedicated the House of *the One, Elohim.*

⁶ *The priests were standing over their charges, and the Levites with the instruments of song to Yahweh that king David had made to acclaim Yahweh — For His benignity is for the eon — when David would acclaim by their hand; and the priests were blowing bugles in front of them, and all Israel were standing.*

⁷ Solomon hallowed the middle part of the court before the House of Yahweh, for there he offered the ascent offerings and the fat pieces of the peace offerings, because the copper altar that *Solomon had made could not* contain the ascent offering and the approach present and the fat pieces.

⁸ Thus Solomon observed the festival at that time *for seven days*, and all Israel with him, a *very* great assembly, coming from Lebo-hamath unto the Wadi of Egypt.

⁹ On the eighth day *they held a day of restraint, for they had observed the dedication of the altar for seven days and the festival for seven days;* ¹⁰ *so on the twenty-third day of the seventh month* he dismissed the people to their tents, rejoicing and cheerful of heart over the goodness that Yahweh had shown to David, to Solomon and to His people Israel. **[end text]**

Verses 66 and 10. Up to this point in his life and rule as king of Israel, all of Solomon's actions demonstrated the wisdom that God gave to him (1 Kings 3:12, 4:29, 5:12; 2 Chronicles 1:12). Solomon asked for **"understanding to make out right judgment"** (1 Kings 3:7–9), which is an excellent definition of wisdom. In fact, in a parallel passage Solomon specifically asked of YHWH: **"Now grant me wisdom and knowledge, and so I shall go forth and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?"** (2 Chronicles 1:10). In response, God gave Solomon a **"wise and discerning heart"** (1 Kings 3:12).

We should all be so bold to make such a request of God. In fact, James tells us to do exactly what Solomon did; he asked for wisdom (James 1:5).

David Sielaff, June 2016