

## **Lecture #15 – Exposition of I Kings 3-8**

### **Chapter 3 – Solomon’s Wisdom – 1014 B.C.**

#### **vs. 1-4 – Solomon’s Beginning**

☪ II Chronicles 1:1-6

Reese believes that Solomon’s first marriage was at 18 when he married Naamah the Ammonite (I Kings 14:21)<sup>1</sup>.

The treaty with Egypt that is marked by his marriage to Pharaoh’s daughter proves the might of the kingdom. Davis writes:

The marriage of Solomon to Pharaoh's daughter is something of great significance (3:1). ‘As far as we know, there is no real example of Pharaoh's daughter given in marriage to a foreign royal house, although the pharaohs quite frequently married daughters of foreign rulers.’ We know for example that Ka-dash-manharbe, king of Babylon, did ask for the hand of Akhenaton's daughter and was flatly refused in rather strong language. In Amarna Letter IV, the following words appear as an answer from King Akhenaton: ‘...from of old, a daughter of the king of Egypt has not been given to anyone.’ The marriage of Solomon to Pharaoh's daughter, therefore, has important political and military implications. It indicates, on the one hand, that Egypt, under the leadership of the Twenty-first Dynasty, was extremely weak. On the other hand, it indicates the military and political superiority of the Solomonic empire over Egypt. The precise identity of Solomon's father-in-law in Egypt is not completely clear at this point. The most widely accepted candidate is Psusennes II who was the last king of the Twenty-first Dynasty. Malamat, however, suggests the possibility of Simanon, the predecessor of Psusennes. Further proof of Solomonic prestige is seen in the dowry given to Solomon on the occasion of his marriage. The city of Gezer, which had been taken by the Egyptians, was used as a wedding gift (I Kings 9:16).’’<sup>2</sup>

The “high places” in verse three are curious. They do not appear to be pagan or idolatrous, which would violate the first part of the verses. These instead appear to be varied places for worship of God because no centralized place was in use. The Tabernacle was at Gibeon and the Ark was in Jerusalem.

Carroll describes this situation well:

“Now we have the king presented to us as a puzzled worshiper. That is to say, there was in Jerusalem the ark of the covenant, in a special tent made for it by David; but there was at Gibeon the old tabernacle that Moses built and also the great brazen altar that Moses had made. Both were places of worship. Solomon determines to have, as a fitting introduction to his reign in which all people shall participate, the most imposing and magnificent religious service known in the world up to that time, and he proposes to have it at both places, first at Gibeon and then before the ark of the covenant at Jerusalem. The old law required only one place of sacrifice. Solomon and others

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<sup>1</sup> Reese’s Chronological Bible, p. 503. He believes it is their romance that inspired the Song of Solomon.

<sup>2</sup> Israel: From Conquest to Exile by John J. Davis and John C. Whitcomb. p. 333-334

before him might claim that the law was to become operative only after the nation was thoroughly established. Our text says that as a house for God had not yet been built, the people worshiped in high places. All through the books of Judges and 1 Samuel, including all the life of David, we see worship occasionally offered at other places than one central place, and particularly was this so after the Philistines had captured the ark and carried it away. So Solomon determines to hold his first service in the old tent that Moses made, and where the old brazen altar was, and then he would come back to Jerusalem and hold a duplicate service before the ark of the covenant in the place where David had put it. In order that this service might be truly national, he sends out a summons to every part of his empire that all the princes and chief men of the nation should come together and participate in this national offering.”<sup>3</sup>

### vs. 5-15 – Solomon Granted Wisdom

☪ II Chronicles 1:7-13

At Gibeon, God appears to Solomon in the night and offers Solomon one request. Edersheim writes:

“The prayer of Solomon on this occasion once more combined the three elements of thanksgiving, confession, and petition. In his thanksgiving, acknowledgment of God mingled with humiliation; in his confession, a sense of inability with the expression of felt want; while his petition, evidently based on the Divine promise (Genesis 13:16; 32:12), was characterized by singleness of spiritual desire. For, in order to know what he sought, when so earnestly craving for ‘understanding,’ we have only to turn to his own ‘Book of Proverbs.’ And, as in the case of all whose spiritual aim is single, God not only granted his request, but also added to what He gave ‘all things’ otherwise needful, thus proving that the ‘promise of the life that now is’ is ever connected with that of the life ‘which is to come’ (2 Timothy 4:8), just as in our present condition the soul is with the body. Perhaps we may put it otherwise in this manner. As so often, God extended the higher wisdom granted Solomon even to the lower concerns of this life, while He added to it the promise of longevity and prosperity - but only on condition of continued observance of God's statutes and commandments (1 Kings 3:14). Such gracious condescension on the part of the LORD called for the expression of fresh public thanksgiving, which Solomon rendered on his return to Jerusalem (1 Kings 3:15).”<sup>4</sup>

It must be noted that Solomon did not keep his part of the promise of vs. 14. By not continuing to walk in the ways of the Lord, God did not bless him with long life.

### vs. 16-28 – Solomon’s Wisdom Displayed

There must have been doubts about the young monarch’s ability to rule, but these were put aside by the display of his practical wisdom granted to him by God. The case recorded here was impossible to

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<sup>3</sup> An Interpretation of the English Bible: The Hebrew Monarchy, by B.H. Carroll. p. 268-269

<sup>4</sup> Bible History: Old Testament by Alfred Edersheim. Book 5, p. 65-66

solve based on the evidence and testimonies. Yet in threatening to divide the baby the true mother's love was revealed. A remarkable solution that we still marvel at today.

## **Chapter 4 – Solomon's Government**

### **vs. 1-19 – Solomon's Administration**

We see the growing size of the government by the increased numbers of officials. The very nature of the government appears to have shifted from that of David in that position of general of the army was the first listed. Under Solomon, the first is the priest and the general is the fourth given. Thus, we see that the military was less of a focus or need during this new reign.

One curious feature of this list are the priests. Zadok and Abiathar are the co-High Priests at the beginning of Solomon's tenure, but Abiathar is quickly deposed for his support of Adonijah. Some read vs. 2 as Azariah the son of Zadok being the High Priest. The strictest reading does not seem to support this, instead making him a "prince of princes" or prime minister.

To support his growing central government, Solomon divides the nation into twelve districts<sup>5</sup> with officers to oversee taxation. Each district was responsible for supplying one month's needs to the central government. These must have been high ranking officials as two of them (see vs. 11, 15) were allowed marriage to daughters of the king.

### **vs. 20-25 – Solomon's Greatness**

The territory controlled by Solomon was from the Euphrates River ("the river" of vs. 21) on the north to Egypt on the south. The situation is marked by peace (vs. 24) and prosperity (vs. 25).

Of note in this passage is the number of references to fulfilled promises. In verse 20 the people were "as the sand which is by the sea in multitude", fulfilling Genesis 22:17. The borders of the land in verse 24 are the same as promised to Abraham in Genesis 15:18.

Note remarkable daily need in vs. 22-23. John Gill calculates just the bread alone to be sufficient to feed over 29,000, while the Jewish tradition states that 60,000 were supported by Solomon.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> These do not appear to have followed tribal divisions of the land. Perhaps they were more practically drawn.

<sup>6</sup> John Gill's Exposition of the Bible. E-Sword module.

### vs. 26-28 – Solomon’s Cavalry

☪ II Chronicles 9:25

This is a clear violation of Deuteronomy 17:16.

There is a supposed discrepancy between I Kings 4:26 and II Chronicles 9:25 regarding the number of stalls. Careful reading of these verses shows there is no real discrepancy and that they are talking about two different things. I Kings tells us he had 40,000 stalls for the combined needs of his 1,400 chariots (I Kings 10:26 and II Chronicles 1:14) and 12,000 horsemen.<sup>7</sup> I Chronicles tells us that he had 4,000<sup>8</sup> stalls for the chariots and the 12,000 horsemen are separate from that number. 4,000 stalls with individual horses would meet the needs of having one pair of horses per chariot with some being trained and others for backup. But this does not factor in where the mounts for the 12,000 horseman are kept.

### vs. 29-34 – Solomon’s Fame

Solomon’s wisdom exceeded that of any contemporary and drew the attention of the world. He is also noted not just for practical wisdom but for great knowledge of nature.

## **Chapter 5 – Solomon Prepares for the Temple**

We see in this chapter the work of building the Temple beginning in earnest.

### vs. 1-12 – Hiram’s Provision

☪ II Chronicles 2:1-26

Josephus notes the ancient historians that recorded the connection between Hiram and Solomon

“Menander<sup>9</sup> also, one who translated the Tyrian archives out of the dialect of the Phoenicians into the Greek language, makes mention of these two kings, where he says thus: ‘When Abibalus was dead, his son Hiram received the kingdom from him, who, when he had lived fifty-three years,

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew Poole: “Or thus, *and for* (which particle is easily understood and borrowed from the foregoing clause) *twelve thousand horsemen*; and so he means that the 40,000 horses were in part appointed for his chariots, and in part for his 12,000 horsemen.”

<sup>8</sup> Matthew Poole says there is a slight difference between the Hebrew words used for stalls in these two verses, and that these 4,000 were not individual stalls but pens for 10 horses each. The Geneva Bible has a note saying the same. I think this is plausible, and that the time in Babylon/Persia changed the way they word for *stall* was understood. It may have changed from being a stall for a single horse to a stable for ten horses to follow another method of calculation.

<sup>9</sup> Menander of Ephesus was a historian of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. whose works are lost but quoted by Josephus and others.

reigned thirty-four. He raised a bank in the large place, and dedicated the golden pillar which is in Jupiter's temple. He also went and cut down materials of timber out of the mountain called Libanus, for the roof of temples; and when he had pulled down the ancient temples, he both built the temple of Hercules and that of Astarte; and he first set up the temple of Hercules in the month Peritius; he also made an expedition against the Euchii, or Titii, who did not pay their tribute, and when he had subdued them to himself he returned. Under this king there was Abdemon, a very youth in age, who always conquered the difficult problems which Solomon, king of Jerusalem, commanded him to explain.' Dius<sup>10</sup> also makes mention of him, where he says thus: 'When Abibalus was dead, his son Hiram reigned. He raised the eastern parts of the city higher, and made the city itself larger. He also joined the temple of Jupiter, which before stood by itself, to the city, by raising a bank in the middle between them; and he adorned it with donations of gold. Moreover, he went up to Mount Libanus, and cut down materials of wood for the building of the temples.' He says also, that Solomon, who was then king of Jerusalem, sent riddles to Hiram, and desired to receive the like from him, but that he who could not solve them should pay money to them that did solve them, and that Hiram accepted the conditions; and when he was not able to solve the riddles proposed by Solomon, he paid a great deal of money for his fine; but that he afterward did solve the proposed riddles by means of Abdemon, a man of Tyre; and that Hiram proposed other riddles, which, when Solomon could not solve, he paid back a great deal of money to Hiram.' This it is which Dius wrote."<sup>11</sup>

Solomon trades food for the lumber and sends laborers to help.

### vs. 13-18 – Solomon's Builders

#### ☪ II Chronicles 2:27-28

Just as Samuel had warned in I Samuel 8:16, Solomon puts the people to work by forced conscription. 30,000 are sent to aid in bringing lumber from Lebanon, with 10,000 serving for a month on rotation. There were also 70,000 general laborers, 80,000 quarry workers, and 3,600 supervisors.

There is an imagined difference here in the different accounts. I Kings 5:16 says there are 3,300 supervisors *on top of* "the chief of Solomon's officers". II Chronicles 2:18 says there are 3,600 supervisors. The number in II Chronicles must include the chief officers that are not counted in I Kings.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Author of a lost history of Phoenecia.

<sup>11</sup> Antiquities of the Jews, Josephus. Book VIII, chapter 5, paragraph 3.

<sup>12</sup> See Gill on this verse.

## **Chapter 6 – Solomon Builds the Temple**

### **vs. 1-10 – Solomon Begins Construction – 1012 B.C.**

☪ II Chronicles 3:1-2

Reese calculates the 480 years of vs. 1 to be the exact time from the Exodus in 1491 B.C.

Wood describes the building:

“Actual building began in the spring of Solomon's fourth year (c. 966 B.C; 1 Kings 6:1), and it was completed seven years later in the fall (1 Kings 6:38). The building was located on Mount Moriah (2 Chron. 3:1), the site of Araunah's threshing floor, where the plague had stopped in David's day (2 Sam. 24:16-25). In fact, it was most likely the place where Abraham long before had been commanded to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22:2). Mount Moriah was immediately adjacent to David's city on the north.

“The plan of the temple proper called for a building similar to the tabernacle but twice the size. It was ninety feet long and thirty feet wide, and it contained the same two divisions: the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, occupying two-thirds and one-third of the total, respectively. Though built of stone, it was paneled with cedar overlaid with gold.

“The Holy of Holies housed the ark of the covenant (along with its mercy seat and two cherubim). Two additional cherubim were of carved olive wood overlaid with gold and stood fifteen feet high (1 Kings 6:23-28; 2. Chron. 3:10-13). In the Holy Place were the altar of incense or ‘golden altar’ (1 Kings 7:48; 2 Chron. 4:19), ten golden lampstands standing five on each side (1 Kings 7:49; 2 Chron. 4:7), and ten tables of showbread (1 Kings 7:48; 2 Chron. 4:8). In front of the Holy Place was a porch thirty feet wide and ten feet deep, and on the porch stood two bronze pillars called Jachin and Boaz, (1 Kings 7:15-21), elements missing from the tabernacle.

“Along the sides and rear of this structure were chambers three stories high, providing storage area (1 Kings 6:5-10). Around the whole building lay a court similar to that which surrounded the tabernacle. Found in it were the great brazen altar, thirty feet square and fifteen feet high (2 Chron. 4:1); a large laver, or ‘Sea of cast metal’ fifteen feet across the brim (1 Kings 7:23-26); and ten small lavers, five on opposite sides of the building. This court, as well as the temple proper, was restricted to the priests, but around it was a ‘large court’ (2 Chron. 4:9) intended for the people.”<sup>13</sup>

Verse 7 is one of my favorite details. Everything was “precut” so that there was no noise of tools on the mount. What a reverent attitude these workers must have had!

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<sup>13</sup> A Survey of Israel's History by Leon Wood. p. 248-249.

### vs. 11-13 – God’s Promise to Solomon

When David had attempted to build the Temple, he was stopped by God. Now that Solomon has begun the construction, he receives blessing from God on his labor. Not that the promise is not without some personal responsibility on his part – “if thou walk in my statutes...”

### vs. 14-36 – Description of the Temple

☪ II Chronicles 3:3-4:22

I am convinced that this building was the most beautiful ever built by man. For the sake of time, we cannot delve too much into the design or art of its construction.

### vs. 37-38 – Construction Completed

The length of construction was seven years and four months.

## **Chapter 7 – Solomon’s Construction Projects**

### vs. 1-12 – Solomon’s Palaces

There are three buildings described here that are likely part of the same complex. The “house of the forest of Lebanon” is the state house and judgment hall. Then in vs. 8 there is Solomon’s personal residence and the palace for Pharaoh’s daughter.

### vs. 13-51 – Hiram’s Handiwork

Just as God had prepared Bezaleel to oversee the construction of the Tabernacle (Exodus 35:30), He has prepared Hiram (not to be confused with the king) to oversee the construction of the Temple.

Two pillars are made for the porch and named Jachin (“He shall establish”)<sup>14</sup> and Boaz (“fleetness”<sup>15</sup> or “strength”<sup>16</sup>). The new brass laver (“molten sea”) would hold over 17,000 gallons of water.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Smith’s Bible Dictionary

<sup>15</sup> Smith’s Bible Dictionary

<sup>16</sup> Reese’s Chronological Bible, p. 532.

<sup>17</sup> Reese’s Chronological Bible, p. 533.

Smaller brass lavers were put on brass carts. Of gold were made the altar of incense, the table of shewbread, ten golden candlesticks and many other implements.

While it is not highlighted as much in the account here as compared to that in Chronicles, note in vs. 51 the role David played in preparing for the Temple.

♪ Psalm 128, 132

## **Chapter 8 – Solomon Dedicates the Temple**

### **vs. 1-11 – The Dedication of the Temple**

☪ II Chronicles 5:1-14

Note in vs. 2 that this takes place in the seventh month. Since the construction ended in the eighth month (6:38), there has been almost a year of preparation made for this grand celebration. The “feast” is the Feast of Tabernacles. We will see in vs. 65 that the combined celebration of the Dedication and Feast of Tabernacles is two weeks in length.

Note in vs. 8 that the staves are removed from the Ark. This was not done in the Tabernacle. This shows the expected permanence of placing the Ark there.

The inventory of items in the Ark can be compared to Hebrews 9:4. The additional items may have been placed beside the Ark.

God’s approval of the Temple is shown by the appearance of the “glory cloud”, or *shekinah* (“the dwelling”)<sup>18</sup>. The 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia defines *shekinah* as “the majestic presence or manifestation of God which has descended to ‘dwell’ among men.”<sup>19</sup> Easton’s Bible Dictionary describes it:

“A Chaldee word meaning resting-place, not found in Scripture, but used by the later Jews to designate the visible symbol of God’s presence in the tabernacle, and afterwards in Solomon’s temple. When the Lord led Israel out of Egypt, he went before them ‘in a pillar of a cloud.’ This was the symbol of his presence with his people. For references made to it during the wilderness wanderings, see Exodus 14:20; Exodus 40:34-38; Leviticus 9:23, Leviticus 9:24; Numbers 14:10; Numbers 16:19, Numbers 16:42.

“It is probable that after the entrance into Canaan this glory-cloud settled in the tabernacle upon the ark of the covenant in the most holy place. We have, however, no special reference to it till the consecration of the temple by Solomon, when it filled the whole house with its glory, so that the priests could not stand to minister (1 Kings 8:10-13; 2 Chronicles 5:13, 2 Chronicles 5:14; 2

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13537-shekinah> - accessed 10-10-22

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13537-shekinah> - accessed 10-10-22



Chronicles 7:1-3). Probably it remained in the first temple in the holy of holies as the symbol of Jehovah's presence so long as that temple stood. It afterwards disappeared.”<sup>20</sup>

♪ Psalm 134, 136

### vs. 12-61 – Solomon's Dedication

☪ II Chronicles 6:1-42

Solomon's first remarks (vs. 12-13) are to the priests, noting the presence of the cloud and its significance.

He continues by addressing the people (vs. 14-21) and acknowledging the fulfillment of God's promise to David in the building of the Temple.

He then kneels<sup>21</sup> and offers a grand dedicatory prayer (vs. 22-54). He prays that God would accept this building and dwell among them (vs. 23-30), that judgment would be right (vs. 31-32), that God would hear their prayers of repentance in days of defeat (vs. 33-34), that God would hear their prayers in time of drought and pestilence (vs. 35-40), that the strangers be converted (vs. 41-43), and that God would be with them in battle (vs. 44-45). The climax of the prayer (vs. 46-53) asks that God hear the prayer of repentance if Israel should ever stray and be taken from the land.

Solomon then pronounces a blessing on the people (vs. 55-61). He praises God for His blessings and faithfulness to Israel and charges the people to serve Him faithfully.

### vs. 62-66 – Dedication Celebration

☪ II Chronicles 7:4-10

A full week is set celebrated for the dedication of the Temple, and then the following week it appears the Feast of Tabernacles was observed.<sup>22</sup> 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep are offered as peace offerings<sup>23</sup> over the course of the celebration.

There is some debate in these passages about the role Solomon plays in the sacrifices. Carroll is an example of those that believe he acted the part of a priest: "...and now note a singular fact, viz.: that Solomon acted as both king and priest, a royal priest, a priest on a throne, and all through his life, he seems not only to perform the functions of the high priest, but he keeps the entire priesthood subject

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<sup>20</sup> Easton's Bible Dictionary

<sup>21</sup> see vs. 54.

<sup>22</sup> Thus, the "seven days and seven days, even fourteen days" of 8:65.

<sup>23</sup> Remember that with Peace Offerings only a portion of the sacrifice was burned on the Altar (Leviticus 3:4-5,9-10,14-15), while the majority went to the offerer and the priest (Leviticus 7:15-20,29-34). In Texas terms, they had a giant barbeque.

to his immediate control.”<sup>24</sup> Others believe Solomon only acted through the proxy of the priesthood and maintained the strict and right division between the two offices. Commenting on I Kings 8:63, Poole says that when Solomon offered the sacrifices he did so “by the hands of the priests.”<sup>25</sup> When it says in I Kings 9:25 that Solomon offered incense to God, Barnes comments: “Not with his own hand, but by his priests - I Kings 9:25; II Chronicles 5:7-14. In sacred, as in ordinary, history, men are said to do that which they cause to be done.”<sup>26</sup> While Solomon had many shortcomings, I do not personally see how he could have usurped the priesthood and believe that he did not do these offerings with his own hands.

♪ Psalm 100

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<sup>24</sup> An Interpretation of the English Bible: The Hebrew Monarchy, by B.H. Carroll. p. 297-298.

<sup>25</sup> Matthew Poole’s Commentary, E-Sword module.

<sup>26</sup> Barnes’ Notes, E-Sword module.