

The Building of the Temple

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[0 : 00] Let's turn back to that chapter, chapter 6 of 1 Kings, reading from the beginning once again.

In the 480th year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month he began to build the house of the Lord.

It's likely that you found it difficult to keep up with the reading of this chapter. This chapter is one which, if you're an architect, or if you're into building at all, you will be able to picture.

You know, there's some people in the world who have got this natural knack of being able to read a specification like that. This is a technical specification. And some people are able to read this, and they're able to formulate in their minds.

They close their eyes, and they can instantly picture what is going on. Some of you possibly have got an instant picture of this, but most of us are not able to do that.

[1 : 21] And so we have to study this chapter greatly, and it's helpful, it's always helpful to go to books which have drawn sketches of what this temple looked like, what this building looked like.

And you'll find a first-class sketch in the ESV Study Bible. There's a double-page, first-class color sketch. It's a cross-sectional diagram of what the temple looked like.

And that's something that is very, because this temple was a visible thing. Buildings are visible. And it's very difficult to get a picture of what a building looked like just from the description, from the verbal description in chapter 6.

And so you'll be relieved to know that whatever else we're going to do this evening, that we're not going to the precise dimensions or the design or anything like that. In many ways, the temple that Solomon put seven years of his life into and devoted his energies into, it was made on the design that was typical for religious buildings of that time.

Archaeologists tell us, for example, that what they found, the relics that they found around about that time, bear a lot of resemblance to some of the details that we have here.

[2 : 38] But that's really not the point. The point is that this building was different, was vastly different in one particular, in two particular ways.

First of all, it was different in its cost. I said this morning that this was the most expensive building in the whole world. And I make no apology. I have absolutely no doubt in my mind whatsoever about saying that it was the most expensive building that has ever been built.

And I'll say this, that it is the most expensive building that ever will be built as well. And you may say, well, how's that? How can you tell? How do you know that there may not be a more expensive building?

Because of one simple factor, and that is the price of gold. Gold. Because the key word throughout this whole design and throughout this whole construction is gold.

There was gold everywhere. The entirety of the inside of this vast temple was gold. And let's try and work out that in 1 Chronicles chapter 22, you don't need to look at it up just now, but just to try and get a picture of the vast, because I believe that we'll never appreciate what's written down here until we appreciate.

[3 : 59] I think we've seen this already. We've appreciated the lavishness, the generosity, the sheer extravagance of what's going on here. This beggar's belief, it takes your breath away.

It's not just a big building. It's not just an expensive building. It is quite, it stands alone as the most magnificent building of all time.

In 1 Chronicles chapter 22 and verse 14, you'll discover that David, Solomon's father, he had it in mind to build the temple. That was his one desire. It was the one prayer that God said no to.

And God accepted, God's answer, sorry, rather, David accepted God's answer to his prayer, even although it was his heart's desire and longing that he build the temple for the Lord.

God said no, it's not you that's going to build it, your son will build it after him. Of course, the son was Solomon. Nevertheless, David was able to spend years of his latter life preparing and getting ready all the materials.

[5 : 03] And one of those materials, of course, was gold. Central to this, the building of the temple was gold. And 1 Chronicles 22, 14, you can read it later on, it tells us. Now, wait for this, that David collected 100,000 talents of gold.

Now, this is quite apart from the amount of gold that was raised by the people of Israel for the temple. People of Israel gave themselves, of their free will and their generosity, towards the gold.

But quite apart from that, David collected 100,000 talents of gold. Now, what the books tell me is this, I'm not sure.

The books tell me this, that the entirety of the gold that went into the temple was a thirtieth of the entirety of the gold reserves in the whole world. That's how much gold we're talking about.

100,000 talents of gold. Now, let's do some calculations, okay? A talent is 75 pounds. We're going to have to work in ounces and pounds, I'm afraid, because that's the way these things are.

[6 : 10] But we'll just, we'll come to the right answer at the end of the day. 100,000 talents of gold went into the temple. That's how much David collected. 75 pounds equals one talent.

You'd multiply 100,000 by 75, and you get 7.5 million pounds of gold, okay? 16 ounces to one pound, that's what you learned if you're my age in school, when you went to school.

16 ounces, one pound. So that means 120 million ounces. And the price of an ounce of gold today is \$850, \$850 per ounce.

And if you multiply 120 million ounces by \$850, you come to a sum of \$102 billion.

Please prove me wrong if you think I'm wrong. 102. I looked it up on the internet, and the internet agrees with me. There are sites that have done this calculation. 102 billion.

[7 : 15] That's only the gold. That's not the cedar or the stonework. It's not the labor. It's not the work. That's just the gold. \$102 billion.

That's in today's prices. But someone has actually suggested that it was even more expensive in those days because gold was more valuable in those days than it is just now. When we come to the silver, there was a million talents of silver that David had collected for the temple.

And you think, well, silver is expensive. Silver is like dross. It's negligible in Solomon's day as far as he was concerned. But in any case, the price of silver is \$11 an ounce.

That comes to \$13.2 billion. So you add these two together, just the gold and the silver, and they come to a bill of \$115 billion, which is, at the dollar rate of 1.5, 77 billion pounds.

That's just the gold and the silver. Now, you compare that with the most expensive buildings in the world. I looked up on the internet. It's debatable whether it's the GM building in New York or the Rockefeller building or the Bank of China building in Hong Kong.

[8 : 25] These buildings are no more than about \$4 or \$5 billion. Do you get the picture of what's happening here? Even if we're slightly inaccurate in our calculations, this is utterly incredible.

And I'll tell you what's more incredible. That here is arguably the wealthiest king that's ever lived in all the world, and he's amassed an absolute fortune.

And he's going to spend that fortune, because he only lives once. I guess that when you're a king, and when you can do anything as a king, everything, the power is at your fingertips.

You can just snap your fingers, and you get anything you want. And you're going to spend that fortune on... You're going to spend a large sum of it on yourself, aren't you?

You're going to build your palace. You're going to make sure that you build something that's going to impress your neighbors. And it's going to give the message to the whole world of how wealthy and successful you are, because riches are power, aren't you?

[9 : 32] But instead of that, Solomon decided to pour \$115 billion worth into this temple. And once he had...

This is the most amazing thing of all. Listen to this. Once he had dedicated the temple, once he had designed it and fashioned it and constructed it and built it and was finished with it, and he prayed his prayer of dedication, he never stepped inside that building again, because it was closed.

As soon as it was dedicated, he couldn't, because the inside, the gold-laden interior of the building, was only a place where only the priests could go.

You weren't allowed to go in. So Solomon never saw it again. He never saw any more of his \$115 billion. Now, let me ask you this.

Why would any king in his right mind pour that kind of money into a building that he never went into again?

[10 : 45] Isn't it insane? Do you not think that there's something insane about this? There isn't. And I'll tell you why.

Because here was a man whose heart was right with the Lord. And the reason he wanted to give his all... This is Solomon telling us, telling the whole world that the Lord means everything to him.

And he's telling the whole world, I'd rather have God than any amount of riches in the whole world. He says, Solomon, this is a whole... The message that's going through this chapter is this.

The worship of God to me is everything. And I don't care if I have to give God every single penny. God is worth it because of who he is to me and what he's done to me.

And what... So what is this all about? Why was it? Why was it that it was so important for Solomon to build this temple for the Lord? It was not a way of him being saved.

[11 : 50] No one has ever been saved by giving money to the Lord. That's not the message at all. But what Solomon... And we've seen this before. What Solomon is telling us is this. I love God because he first loved me.

And this love of God, this grace of God was so valuable to him. It was beyond price. And it was something that he wanted to do out of a response to what God had done for him.

Why was it so important? And why what was... What was so significant about this building?

And it was very simply this. It was about the worship of God. Now, there's two ways in which you can understand what worshipping God is all about.

There's a wrong way and there's a right way. The wrong way is to try to reach God by going through a whole bunch of rituals and processes.

[12 : 54] And to think that we, by our own strength and our own way, can reach God and satisfy him and please him. That's the wrong way of worshipping God. And if that's why we're here this evening, then we fail.

Before we go any further, we're failing. The right way is when we come to God in response to what he has done for us and what he has told us and spoken to us.

And this is Solomon's response. And this is his way of saying to the Lord and to the rest of the world, this is how much God means to me.

And it all goes back in history, in the history of Israel, the history of God dealing with his people. We all go back, just like we did this morning, go back to Genesis chapter 3 where Adam and Eve fell in the Garden of Eden.

Again, it's interesting that the first thing that God did after he had put Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden was this. Do you ever notice this? I'm sure most of you have. But you can go back and read it again later on.

[13 : 57] Genesis chapter 3, when God evicted Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, the first thing he did was he provided skins for them. You ever notice that?

He provided skins for them. Now, these skins were to cover their nakedness. But in actual fact, when you think about it, they could have covered their own nakedness if they had wanted to. They had made a feeble attempt to do so as God walked in the garden.

But this was God providing skins to cover them. And the skins had come from animals. Why was it that God chose an animal to produce skin for them?

And that implies that the animal died. God put the animal to death in order to provide to cover their sin. That was the very first animal sacrifice.

The very first occasion when a living being laid down his life or was made to lay down his life as a substitute for our sin. And for Adam and Eve's sin.

[14 : 55] Centuries after that, when God called Abraham in Genesis chapter 12, as the story of salvation continues through the Bible. As Abraham comes into the promised land and as he makes his home in Canaan, the very first thing he does is he builds an altar to the Lord.

And here is our worship progressing. It's becoming more and more established. So that it begins with God providing skins for Adam and Eve.

But then it progresses to Abraham building an altar to the Lord. What did he do on that altar? He placed an animal. He put an animal to death. And it was by the death of the animal and the sacrifice of the animal that he came close to God.

And he found communion with God. Why was that? Because the Bible tells us that by the shedding of blood, it is by the shedding of blood that there is forgiveness of sin.

Fast forward 500 years to Moses. And when God, when Moses, when God threw Moses, took the people of Israel out of Egypt, took them into the desert, what was the first thing he did?

[16 : 06] He started worshiping God. And what happened there? God commanded him to build a tabernacle. What's happening? The skins are first. Then there's Abraham and his altar.

And then 500 years hence, there's a further establishment, a further development of a place of worship. Worship is central to our relationship with God.

What's happening? Now we're fast forwarding 500 years again to Solomon's time. And this time instead of a tabernacle where there's an altar, there is now a building, an established, magnificent building.

But at the end of the day, it comes down to this. The building is all about our relationship with God.

And it was so important to Solomon that he was prepared to spend that kind of money on proving to the world and demonstrating to the world how important it was for him.

[17 : 09] And this was a terrific witness. And it was a reflection of what God meant to him. So it all comes down to this. It's a place where our sins, where God meets with us and where our sins are removed.

Now, it all sounds very complicated, doesn't it, in 1 Kings chapter 6 as we try to make our way around it. It all sounds very complicated. But in actual fact, when you read, and we didn't have time to read chapter 7 as well, but when you go into the actual interior of the building, it comes down to three places.

You can divide the whole thing into three sections. There was, first of all, there was the outside section. Now, that wasn't covered in gold at all because that was out in the open air.

In that section, there were two things. There was a huge altar. You see the common theme that's running all the way down through history is that there's an altar.

And that was central. If you don't have the altar, you can forget the whole thing. And I'll explain that in a few moments' time. There is the altar. And then, alongside the altar, there is a massive, you read chapter 7, you'll read how big it was, a massive basin.

[18 : 20] It was a metal basin. And the purpose of this basin was that the priests, who represented the people before God, that they had to keep themselves clean.

And this basin was for them to make sure that they were always clean in whatever they did. So there was the altar and there was the basin. That was what was on the outside. Once you got to the inside, and the inside, by the way, was closed off.

Only the priests could go into the inside. There were three things, three items of furniture. Remember, the inside was all covered in gold. This place was absolutely magnificent.

It was absolutely gorgeous and beautiful. And inside this room, called the holy place, there were three things. There was a table on which bread was put every week.

Twelve loaves of bread were put every week. That was a golden table that stood there in the inner place. Then, there were ten lamps. Originally, in the tabernacle, there was only one.

[19 : 22] But here in Solomon's, there were ten huge golden lamps, oil lamps, that gave light to this whole chamber. And then, the third thing was a golden altar.

But this time, on the altar, there were no animals. But this was an altar that burnt incense, sweet-smelling incense to the Lord. These three things. So that was the second section of the temple.

On the inside, on the very inside of the temple, and here was where nobody ever went except once a year. And it was only the high priest that ever went. And that was the most holy place, or the holy of holies.

And inside this hole, again, covered and overlaid with gold. And inside here was one item of furniture, and that was called the Ark of the Covenant.

And the Ark of the Covenant was very simple. It was simply a box. Rather like a kind of ottoman that we would have, maybe, in our homes.

[20 : 23] It was a box. And this box was overlaid with gold. It was a hollow box. It was an empty box. The most significant thing about this was not the box itself, but the covering, which was pure, solid gold.

And it was called the Atonement Cover, or the Mercy Seat. And here, engraved and fashioned out of this gold, were two cherubim.

And they were both looking, fashioned in such a way that their wings touched each other, and that they looked down into the box. Now, inside the box, there was Aaron's rod. There were the Ten Commandments.

And there was a pot of manna. These three things inside the Ark of the Covenant. Now, the significant thing about this inner chamber, this most holy place was, I'm going to read this later on, was that once Solomon dedicated the temple to the Lord, do you know what happened?

And here is, this is what it's all about. This was the most magnificent thing of all. That once Solomon dedicated this place of worship to the Lord, do you know what happened?

[21 : 24] God literally came to live in that chamber. He came to stay. That's what happened.

The Bible puts it like this, that the glory of the Lord filled the holy place. The glory of God came to rest in that place.

Now, I know the kind of questions you might have. Well, why does God need to come to live in any one particular... I thought God was everywhere. God is everywhere. And yet, by his own word and his own promise, and it's not for me to say how this happened, but this is what happened.

God chose to come and to dwell, to live with his people in their city, in this temple, so that they would worship him from close quarters.

So here's what happens. In the inner part of the temple is God. The glory of God.

[22 : 28] And he is living, quite literally living, in the middle of his people in their city in Jerusalem, because the temple was in the middle of Jerusalem. So this is in the middle of his kingdom.

But you can't get through. Because there are two entrances. There's the entrance to the most holy place, and there's the entrance to the...

There are three entrances, rather. There's the entrances to the most holy place, the entrances to the holy place, and the door to the temple itself. So the signs are, the notice, if you like, if there was a notice on the door, keep out.

Why must we keep out? Because of sin. And that's why, as soon as you go through the first door, there's an altar there. And as soon as you set eyes on the altar, do you know what you're confronted with?

Once again, you're confronted with the reason why you and I are separate from God. Because of our sin. Our sin is what separates us from God. But God has a message for us.

[23 : 33] He has made provision. He's created a way where that sin can be removed. God is determined to take away our sin. If only we would trust in him. And in a way, the problem is we're so busy trying to impress God by trying to do our best.

We're not listening to him. And here is what God is saying to us in picture form. He's saying there's only one way to me. And that is if I take away your sin. Hence, there is a massive, great altar.

Just in case you miss it. The problem is our sin. It distracts us and it encourages us to try and dream up all kinds of different ways and methods and styles of trying to live good lives.

And God is saying, are you listening to me? Here is the only one way in which your sin will be removed. The Bible tells us this.

The shedding of blood. The shedding of blood. And that was where. It was this altar on which there was never an end to the shedding of blood. Animal upon animal. Burnt offerings.

[24 : 38] Fellowship offerings. Peace offerings. There would be that was that was that was the way in which in which we could be made right with God. And as the sacrifice was made, the priests who represented the people of God, they would go into the holy place.

And they would see the greatness, the loveliness of the inner chamber. And they would enjoy the nearer presence of God on behalf of the people.

And once a year, there was a day called the great day of atonement when all the people gathered around. And there was a very special sacrifice. And when the holy, the high priest would go into the innermost chamber.

Only once a year. And he always had to have blood. In order to present that blood before the presence, the glory of God.

When I was giving a history just a few moments ago of how this temple was developed. First of all the skins. Then the altar. Then the tabernacle. Now the temple. It doesn't end there.

[25 : 46] Because a day came when that temple was destroyed. In all its beauty and glory and majesty, it was destroyed. But it was destroyed because God replaced it with Jesus.

Jesus is that one single sacrifice that the temple looked forward to. And just like the temple said to Israel, there is a way to God.

There is one way to God. Jesus came into the world and he said to us, I am the way. And the truth. And the life. And he can say that because he, by his own sacrifice.

By laying down his own life at Calvary. He paid the ransom and the price for our sin. And that's why tonight we're able to look back at this temple and see it in all.

Not just in its magnificence or its worth or its value. But we can see, we can perceive in that temple. How it looked forward to the coming of Jesus Christ.

[26 : 58] In many ways, the temple, if you were to put a title on it. It would have said this. God with us. Do you remember that that's one of the titles for Jesus?

Emmanuel. God with us. Why was it that God came into the world in the person of Jesus Christ to be with us? To take away our sin.

By his own blood on the cross. To take away our sin. So that we could come into know God in a personal way. So that we could be one with God.

So that we could be right with God. And so that God could give us the everlasting life that he promises in Jesus Christ. So what this is, is the Old Testament way of preaching the gospel.

Solomon is preaching the gospel to us. The temple is preaching the gospel to us. It's looking forward to the day when Jesus would come into the world. And where Jesus, by his sacrifice, would be God and sinners reconciled.

[28 : 09] That's the only way to know God this evening. Through Jesus Christ who came to be our temple. God with us. To be the way in which our sin and the barrier that separated us from God could be removed.

And so that we could come to know him as our own saviour. And as our Lord. So tonight, even this story, with all its architecture and all its detail.

With all its complexity. It confronts us once again with Jesus Christ. It points us in the direction. The whole Bible points us in the direction of Jesus Christ.

Everything in the Old Testament looks forward to the coming of Jesus Christ. And when we see in the New Testament Jesus. And this is where his contemporary Jews.

The Jewish leaders fail to recognize him. It's incredible how they fail to recognize who he was. But when we look at the life and the teaching and the death and the resurrection of Jesus.

[29 : 19] The whole Bible comes together and focuses and points to him. The Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Now because Solomon knew the Lord.

And I know that subsequent. And I don't know if I can explain why it was that he turned away from the Lord. So awfully later on in his life. At that moment in time.

At this moment in time. What we see is a man who loves the Lord with all his heart. So as far as he was concerned. His whole life was devoted to his Savior.

And that's what God demands of us this evening. Not just part of our lives. Not just 10%. You know I suppose following Jesus would be easy if he demanded only 10%.

Give God 10% and you can have the rest. That would be easy. I don't think there would be anyone in here tonight who wouldn't be a Christian if God said 10% is all I want. 15%.

[30 : 19] 50%. That's okay. But the fact is tonight. The Lord says this. If anyone would follow me. Let him deny himself.

And take up his cross daily. And follow me. That's what Jesus demands. That's what Jesus demands. And here is a living example. Of someone who loves the Lord.

Solomon wasn't made to do this at all. He never. You don't get the impression at any time that Solomon is reluctant. He's not trying to keep back. You know how when people are sometimes building a building.

You know they'll skimp and they'll save on some things because they feel that they don't want to spend too much money. You know how when a building is built.

There's an estimate. And as the building is continuing. You discover that the price of the building goes up and up. It's a bit like the Scottish Parliament.

[31 : 18] There was the estimate at first. And I don't know how many times more the eventual cost was from the original estimate. And when you're doing that you're kind of tempted all the time to skimp and save.

That's not what we read about here at all. But nothing was too much for Solomon. Why? Because the Lord meant everything to him.

And when Jesus is your saviour he'll mean everything too. Your whole life will be oriented towards him. Your decisions will be taken on the basis of what he wants you to do.

You'll ask him. You'll ask in everything that you do. How is this going to glorify God? Is God going to be? Is this obedient to the Lord?

And it's not because we're made to. It's because we want to. God changes your whole will and your desires. And he gives you an appetite for himself.

[32 : 21] He changes your heart and your mind and your purpose. And gives you a new life and a new beginning by his sacrifice. So that's what it means to follow Jesus.

An extravagant love for him. Because God loved us extravagantly. And gave everything. His own son.

For us. Let's pray. Bless your word to us once again.

Oh Lord. As we further discover Jesus Christ in its pages. Father in heaven we pray that you'll fill our hearts. With the reality of the gospel.

And show us how to follow Jesus. And Lord show us how to see. That the world and the life that we have.

[33 : 20] That even if we have everything. And if we make the most of our lives. We have nothing. If we don't have Jesus. And we ask Lord to. That you will show us. How to trust in him.

And open up our hearts. So that we may come to him in faith. In Jesus name. Amen. Jesus. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.