

Reflected Glory

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bible with you, please turn with me to 1 Kings chapter 6. 1 Kings chapter 6. We're not going to be reading the entire chapter.

An architect would absolutely love this chapter, but we're not going to be reading it all. I'm going to be reading just a few verses just to pick up the general theme of where we're going.

So 1 Kings chapter 6. Now hear God's word. 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.

The house that King Solomon built for the Lord was 60 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, 30 cubits high. The vestibule in front of the nave of the house was 20 cubits long, equal to the width of the house and 10 cubits deep in front of the house.

And he made for the house windows with recessed frames. He also built a structure against the wall of the house, running round the walls of the house, both the nave and the inner sanctuary.

[1 : 35] And he made the side chambers all round. The lowest story was five cubits broad. The middle one was six cubits broad. And the third was seven cubits broad.

For the round, the outside of the house, he made offsets on the wall in order that the supporting beams should not be inserted into the walls of the house.

When the house was built, it was with stone prepared at the quarry, so that neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron was heard in the house while it was being built.

If you turn to verse 11 now, it says, Now the word of the Lord came to Solomon concerning the house that you are building. If you will walk in my statutes and obey my rules and keep all my commandments and walk in them, then I will establish my word with you, which I spoke to David your father.

And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and I will not forsake my people Israel. So Solomon built the house and finished it.

[2 : 48] If you'd like to turn over your page, well, I have to turn over my page and go down to verse 31. It says, For the entrance of the inner sanctuary, he made doors of olive wood.

The lintel and the doorposts were five-sided. He covered the two doors of olive wood with carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. He overlaid them with gold and spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees.

So also he made for the entrance the nave of the doorposts of olive wood in the form of a square. And two doors of cypress wood, two leaves of one door were folding, and two leaves of the other door were folding.

On them he carved cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, and he overlaid them with gold, evenly applied on the carved work.

He built the inner court with three courses of cut stone and one course of cedar beams. In the fourth year, the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid, in the month of Ziv.

[3 : 58] And in the eleventh year, in the month of bull, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its parts. And according to all its specifications, he was seven years in building it.

Well, may God bless the reading of his word and, of course, the meaning of it. Now, if you're thinking, what on earth is Daniel going to say about an architectural plan?

Well, I used to be a draftsman of sorts, so I loved it. But before we get there, let's bring our praise before our God once more with this next hymn.

We'll know that we're making our way through the life of Solomon, rather than making our way through one King's. And the first part of King's, of course, concentrates on Solomon's life and endeavors.

Now, our introduction to Solomon so far has been one where he's hardly been the type of king, at least at the beginning, before asking for wisdom, that reflects God.

[5 : 09] Now, this is important for us this evening, because this whole passage in 1 Kings 6 is all about reflecting God. The whole part of the chapter is about reflecting God.

But you'll remember a time when Solomon, there's no doubt, was God's appointed king. And his kingship came about through almost, you could say, a volatile situation.

But God had his way. And God always has his way. God's man is always going to be God's appointed man at God's appointed time. And Solomon was not only the king, but he was God's appointed king.

Something promised to David, and something which has materialized in his life, which we see. Solomon, on the other hand, was not exactly the king that he was meant to be right from the beginning.

And we see this in his dealing in putting men to death. But then, in the next chapter, he calls out to God for wisdom. God says, you ask of me anything that you like.

[6 : 16] And the moment he is given wisdom, and he receives that wisdom, suddenly you begin to see a change in Solomon that you didn't see before. Now, that change is an important change.

Because suddenly, now the king is reflecting God. Where prior to receiving the wisdom of God, he was perhaps reflecting only right decisions.

And even though a decision can be right, it can be done in a kind of way that doesn't necessarily reflect God. You may be right, and some people may even say, well, I'm technically right.

Okay, but the issue here is whether or not it is godly in everything that Solomon did. I don't think Solomon is guilty of anything in these preceding chapters.

But I think it's equally true that there's clearly a case to be made that Solomon is more godly, or at least closer to the way God does things in these latter chapters, than he was in the beginning chapters.

[7 : 22] We also saw in chapter 5 of One's King, that Solomon clearly had a determination of over how things ought to be done.

And the lesson that we learn from this is that in his dealing with king of Tyre, Hiram, that the king came up with an idea of how things ought to be done, and Solomon says, no, effectively, we're doing it a different way.

And I think one of the reasons that Solomon did that is because that when you work in a world with unbelievers, not everybody has in mind the things of God.

Not everybody's motivation is the same. And Solomon has this trade-off with the king of Tyre, of which he's very friendly with, but who's not a God-fearing man.

He clearly identifies God's blessing upon Solomon, and he clearly identifies how good David was towards him. But when he sets out how things ought to be done, Solomon overturns this.

[8 : 27] And here's the reason why. Because the motivation is very different. Solomon understands that his motivation, that the contribution of him, is for the king's glory, and for the king's, God's glory, that is, the true king, and for the temple to be built in God's way.

The parallel is fairly simple, that we live in a world, and even in churches, where not everybody's contribution in the church has in mind the glory of God. That's a sad thing to say, isn't it?

But that's the reality that comes out in 1 Kings 5, that not everybody's contribution to the work of God has in mind the things of God, or even the glory of God.

Solomon is very wise to this. And so not only does he say how he wants things done, he makes sure that they are done in that way. Why? Because what's at stake is God's glory.

What's at stake is how this reflects on God. Not how it reflects on him, but this is for God. In other words, why am I so precise? A man asked Roland Hill, why are you so precise in everything that you say and everything that you do?

[9 : 46] And his answer was very, very simple. It's because I serve a precise God. You know, I'm not lapsedadical. It's not just that anything will do. No, no, no.

We're dealing with a God who is absolutely precise in all of his dealings. He's absolutely certain about the worship of God concerning him. And so this idea that we can do it in our own way just gets lost in Scripture because God, while God understands why you're thinking it, it just doesn't apply to him.

No, no, no. God's ordering must be done in God's ways by us. Tyre, the king of Tyre, his motivation was simply food for his royal household.

But Solomon knew that this temple was for God. It was to reflect on God. Here then is the kind of summary, I guess, of what we've seen so far and what we're about to see.

In chapter five, it was the coming together of the fulfillment of the promise, but the promise has not yet been fulfilled. And we saw that when God makes a promise to his people, that sometimes you can laugh at him.

[10:58] Sarah did that very thing. God made a promise concerning Sarah and Abraham that they would have a child. Sarah laughs, only for God to turn around a few months later to say who's laughing now.

Sarah's given the child, okay, but she's given a child in a time and environment where it looks impossible for that kind of promise to come about. And in the same way, Solomon is given this promise that he would build the temple at a time where it didn't look possible that a temple could be built.

So in 1 Kings 5, you have the coming together of materials and peace in the land. And now in 1 Kings 6, you have the building of the actual temple.

In other words, you have the fulfilling of the promise of God. And what you'll notice is that the chapter opens, the chapter opens with the date, the date and time as it were.

And it finishes with the date and time as if to say, look, something new is beginning and something new has been completed. Or you could say the promise is beginning to being fulfilled and at the end of the chapter, this is when the promise was fulfilled.

[12:11] In other words, there's date and month and record as to exactly when God fulfilled the promise of the temple being built. And right in the middle of this, you have these verses in verses 11 through to 13.

The conditional promise that God's presence with his people is always going to be on the basis that it has always been on. And that is that God dwells with the people who love him and who obey him, not who have a building which they can meet him.

Okay? God's presence with his people has always been based on this very simple principle, that God dwells with the people who love him in faith and obey his laws, not who has a building to meet him.

And so right in the middle of this section of the exterior of the temple being built and the interior of the temple being shown to us, we have this reminder from God to Solomon, remember why I am with you.

Remember why I am with you. God doesn't move into a completed temple. As if to say that once this temple has been completed, then God will move in and he will demonstrate to everyone, now I'm dwelling with my people.

[13:33] No, no, no. The temple doesn't do that. And Solomon has to remember that God's people are with him, that God is with his people on the basis and only on the basis that they love his law and follow it.

So we're going to look at the three things. Number one, the temple, the exterior. Number two, the interior, which by the way, if you were around when it was being built, you would not have got to see.

Why? Because only the priest got to see the inner temple. We get to see the drawings, we get to see what it was like, but we would have never got to enter into it because that was only reserved for priests.

But it raises a very important issue and that is, why do we need a temple at all? If God's presence is not based upon having a temple, then why do we need it?

If God's presence with his people is based upon their love for him and their obedience to him, why a temple? Okay, apart from the sacrifices that need to happen, apart from the atonement that needs to take place by the priest, why a temple?

[14:44] I think very, very simply, is God is trying to make a very important point here that everyone must realize. So we're just going to go through them. Beginning with this, the temple. The temple.

The temple represented, only represented, God's presence with his people. That's what it represented. But here's the issue.

Over in the book of Jeremiah, you have a group of God's people who are no longer loving God, who are no longer loving his law, or are no longer obeying his law. Yet because they have a temple, they feel safe.

Because they have a physical building that represents the fact that God is with them, they kind of feel safe in the reality that therefore God must be with us. Forgetting that God's presence with his people has only ever been based upon their relationship with him and his relationship with them. So here they have a temple that they're taking comfort in, but God's not there. And God has to point out to his people who live this relationship with him in total disobedience to God, but taking comfort in a physical temple, that how do I get through to a people who think they are enjoying my presence when actually they're not?

[16:04] Well, there's only one way you can do it. You get rid of the temple. That's the very thing that God does in Jeremiah. All of these people trusting in the physical presence of a temple as if to say, as long as we have this, the surrounding nations will believe that God is with us.

And we can actually convince ourselves that God is with us because we have a temple. Because God always said that the completion of the temple would be a reflection of my presence with you. Well, it is that, but only on the basis that you obey him.

And how does God get through to his people? Well, he removes the temple and suddenly they get the picture that perhaps God isn't with us. You know, perhaps we've convinced ourself of the wrong thing.

And so suddenly this temple is to reflect God's presence with his people, but only on the condition that his people love and obey him.

So God's not afraid to remove the temple, which he does, because people are to recognize that the key relationship is between them and God, not between them and a physical building.

[17:15] Do you know what? One of the most interesting things in churches throughout the years is that it's not difficult to convince Christians to spend money on a building that will be there in 50 years or even 100 years.

It is incredibly difficult, however, to get Christians to spend money on training individuals that may not be there in three or four years' time. People like to see value for money, and one of the ways they assess that value for money is being able to look at it year after year after year after year.

They even have things in their homes which they say, oh, that was a good buy. I've had it for 15 years. It's though that is the only measurement. Well, what God is saying here is that all of this splendor goes into the work of building the temple which is to reflect God's presence with his people and yet God isn't afraid to remove it if people think that that is an indication of their relationship with God when actually it isn't.

And so it's not that sad or perhaps is it when we see churches today that are now carpet warehouses. It's a sad thing when we see them turned into theatres and the type of shows that are going on in there.

But the church has been gone years ago. Why? Because God makes a very clear distinction between the building and the people. The building may represent something but the representation may not actually be there in the people's lives.

[18:46] So the building's removed and it's a message to the world, isn't it? In the same way a church that has been turned into a museum or a church that's been turned into a cinema no longer reflects the glory of God but reflects whatever it is that they're showing in it.

Then where's the witness of the church now? Well, you begin to see just how important it is to have a physical witness on the high street. Okay? You're inside of a building which nobody can see you but everybody out there can see this building and the lights on inside on the assumption there must be people in it worshipping God.

But if God's people are distant from God and the lights go out then suddenly that physical representation of God being presented to everybody around us is no longer there.

It's obvious. You drive past a shop and if the lights aren't on what do you assume? It's closed. No one's in. It's finished. It's no different with this.

To reduce this as it's a mere physical building would be a mistake. Now this is a very important building but it's only as important as our relationship with God to keep the lights on as it were.

[19:58] To be a witness on a dark night that people out there recognise that there's something happening in here. That's the key to its importance. It reflects God in ways that you perhaps can't

possibly imagine.

But it doesn't always reflect the condition of the people's hearts inside the building and that's the issue of concern. Okay, the interior. What about the interior when we read about all this timber and all of this carving and all of this gold?

You know, I'm sort of old enough now believe it or not to remember a programme called Through the Keyhole. Do you remember that? Yes, back in the 80s I think it was and perhaps even the 90s. And the idea was fairly simple enough. You would have one person wander around somebody else's house into different rooms pointing out this vase and that settee and a couple of photos. And the idea was that you were to surmise all of these things together and the question was and who lives in a house like this? And the idea you were supposed to be able to work out the owner of the house by the contents of the house.

[21 : 12] Okay? You were supposed to be able to get to a clear understanding of who the person was by the type of things that they had in their house. It wouldn't be too difficult to walk into the manse which is not our house it's the churches but it wouldn't be too difficult to walk into the manse and go yeah, they have children.

You know you know it wouldn't be too difficult yeah, they don't have enough space for toys. Okay? It wouldn't be too difficult to be able to come to those conclusions because of what you witness when you walk through the door.

It's not too difficult at all. And so here we have Solomon walking us through as it were the interior of the temple of God and what are you supposed to conclude?

Well you're supposed to conclude who lives in a house like this? The interior is to reflect the owner. Now it doesn't always do that.

You know we can it's amazing how we can put up with the one room that we've never managed to decorate but we always hate the wallpaper and yet we can never get round to changing it.

[22 : 17] And for some reason the door to that room is always closed mainly to outsiders. Okay, why? Well I think it's for the same reason here. It doesn't reflect what we want to be reflected.

We close the doors on the rooms that doesn't reflect how we would like it to be. And in very much of the same way we're wandering through the king's temple here or rather sorry the temple of the Lord that reflects God in all of his glory.

So when we read about this gold and these carvings we say well that's a bit extravagant. No, no, no. Not for God it isn't. Well that's a bit of an overkill. Not for God it isn't.

No, what kind of house if God was going to live in one should it look like? What should it be like?

And suddenly we're getting this beautiful picture of the type of interior that God would approve of.

The type of interior that would reflect God. God. And so in the same way the building of the temple reflects God to the nations that God is present with his people the interior of the temple reflects God to the priests and to us who read about it of just exactly the type of God that we serve and just exactly how his nature and character and glory is being reflected through the contents of this house is exactly the same with the heavens the heavens declare the glory of God in other words the earth or rather we live in the interior of the world and as we look around the world we see God's glory everywhere because everything that God creates is a reflection of his glory the heavens the stars the moon the sun the mountains the riverbeds everything and it it almost doesn't it does matter that man ruins it through sin but nevertheless we're still able to look at the interior of the world and conclude

[24 : 16] God's artistry God's beauty God's cleverness God's eye for what looks good and what is beautiful we begin to look through this world in the same way we look through the temple and understand that it reflects God the heavens declare the glory of God in other words when we look through everything here in this chapter we are meant to conclude who is it that lives in a house like this this must say something about its owner this must say something about the one to whom has fashioned it and so we're not just reading about gold and we're not just reading about timber and we're not just reading about carvings we're reading about the very thing which God approves us the very thing which reflects back on God which God is actually pleased with that's what this interior of the temple is actually doing okay and finally what about the king and his people well it's no different is it in verse 11 through to 13 now the word of the Lord came to Solomon concerning this house that you are building if you walk in my statutes and obey my rules and keep all my commandments and walk in them then I will establish my word with you which I spoke to

David your father and I will dwell among the children of Israel and I will not forsake my people Israel what does it mean well it means this in the same way that the exterior of the temple has to look a certain way and the same way the interior of the temple has to look a certain way your life has to be a certain way in order for God to dwell with you in order for God to dwell with his people his people in the same way that the temple does exteriorly and interiorly have to reflect the glory of God through their lives and how is the glory of God reflected through the lives of people well by them obeying his laws by them obeying his laws that's how God's glory is reflected through us only by obeying the law of God God let me put it a slightly different way sometimes as a child growing up I would forget to do things but then

I would do the thing that I was then asked to do perhaps a few hours later and I would conclude that if I've done the later thing that it cancelled out the earlier thing that I didn't have to do right that makes perfect sense to me perhaps as an adult you've got the same issue that you've asked to do something or this is how it ought to be done you've not done it but a couple hours later or perhaps even a couple days later you've done the next thing but you haven't done the previous thing and you think that by doing the next thing it somehow cancels out the need to do the previous thing well God's people have a habit of doing that very thing that they think well now that we've built the temple okay God's with us we can just get on with it no no no God says you have to obey my laws in other words it's not a case of either or you either do this or this it's a case of both and and you have to obey my laws and you have to build the temple and both are reflective of reflecting my glory in all that we do and so God's people are never to convince themselves that if they do the last thing that they're asked to do by

God that somehow everything is now okay no no no you must do all the things that God has asked you to do and this is why God is reminding Solomon of the very condition of God's presence it's not about building a temple Solomon please Solomon understand that as you build this temple that my presence is not guaranteed upon the completion of the temple rather it is guaranteed upon the obedience of your life to me don't think that by completing this latter thing that it overrules the earlier things that you have left undone that's not how it works and yet too often we convince ourselves that if we do these things now then all of those things that we have left undone God will overlook well there is forgiveness for that but then there is also the cause to do the very things that we have left undone to obey God's law in other words the king's obedience is central to the people's obedience in one respect but the people have to obey all by themselves but even more important than that is that the only way for God to be reflected through his people is if his people love and obey God in other words that his people were fashioned after his law in the same way the temple is fashioned after what God desires the temple to look like that is the only way for

God's glory to be reflected it well here's the exhortation then as we sort of close how do you represent God or rather how is God represented in your life in the life of this church even in the building of this church you know I've been in church circles long enough now to hear someone say we don't want it anymore it'll be good enough for the church I understand what's being said but I'm not entirely sure that it fits with this here rather the issue here is for us to understand that if everything which is created reflects the glory of God and you are made in the image of God then now we begin to see how important it is for you to reflect God's glory if God's glory is reflected through what he creates externally and internally the temple and its interior then it's also reflected through every other part of creation not just the heavens or the mountains or the hills but the very crown of his creation being you in his image see when sin is dwelling in our lives we're not reflecting God it's very hard for God to be seen in our lives when we are being sinful towards another brother or sister or sinning out in the world it's very hard for anybody to look at us and go there's an image of

[30 : 43] God but when you repent of that sin and you pursue godliness and you obey his laws then suddenly the image of God starts appearing the glory of God starts being witnessed in your life why?

because you're obeying the very law that he asked you to obey called you to obey so this whole chapter here is about reflection the reflection of God's glory through what God creates you being the very crown of his creation as it were in that you are made in the very image of God now here's the final thought it would be good for us to remember that there's a lot of detail here and what that means is this that God is very concerned with the details of our lives sincerity means wax on okay sincera literally means without wax that's what it means sincera without wax and the reason being

is because during the Roman times they would build these columns that had cracks in them but they would make up a paste and whitewash them so that when you looked at them on the outside they would look absolutely beautiful and strong but inside they were crumbling so they would ask for the columns to be sincere without wax warts and all to show the true condition of what it is that you have built and that's where the word sincerity comes from without covering it up without covering up every detail before God is to reflect his glory don't cover anything up don't wax over it in many ways continual obedience to God's law equals continuing in his presence and the same way a person in sin feels their distancing themselves being distanced from God that's no surprise seeing that that is what sin does separating us from the very presence of God experientially as it were and the same way as the temple exterior reflected God the interior reflected God your life both exteriorly and interiorly also has to reflect God it's not just about what you do and how you serve God but it's also about those motives as we saw in chapter five that your contribution and your motive that you have in serving

God most importantly we are to remember that we are after all God's creation and what God creates is to reflect God and therefore we confess our sins and obey his law because we are to reflect the glory of God in all that we do and be Amen Alex what let what happened in all that you I lost to you