

# SOLOMON BUILT THE TEMPLE

1 Kings 5 - 9; 2 Chronicles 2 - 7

## STRUCTURE

**Key-person:** Solomon

**Key-location:** Jerusalem

### **Key-repetitions:**

- Solomon built: temple (1 Kin 5:3, 51, 58; 6:1-38; 8:13-27, 43-48; 9:1-3, 15); his own palace (1 Kin 7:1); palace for Egyptian wife (1 Kin 7:8).
- Mention of David: God's promise to fulfill his promise to David, conditional on Solomon obeying the Lord's commands (1 Kin 6:11-13); Solomon mentioned his father David in speech to the people (1 Kin 8:17, 18, 20); Solomon mentioned David in his prayer (1 Kin 8:24, 25, 26).
- If people's sin results in God's punishment and then if the people repent, God would remove the punishment: Solomon's prayer to the Lord (1 Kin 8:33-34, 35-36, 37-40, 46-51); God's answer to Solomon (2 Chr 6:13-14).
- Commandments: God's promise to fulfill his promises to David, conditional on Solomon obeying the Lord's commands (1 Kin 6:11-13); in his blessing, Solomon said that if the hearts of the people were committed to God, they would live by his commandments (1 Kin 8:61); God warned Solomon that if the Lord's commands were rejected, then the Lord would reject the temple (2 Chr 7:20; 1 Kin 9:7).
- Forced labor: Solomon drafted men as forced laborers for his building projects (1 Kin 5:13-14; 9:15).

### **Key-attitudes:**

- Joy and celebration when the temple was dedicated.
- Solomon's sincerity when he prayed.
- Solomon's gratitude for God keeping his promises to his father David.
- Solomon's cruelty in demanding forced labor from his people.
- God's seriousness when he spoke to Solomon.

### **Initial-situation:**

Solomon established himself as king after his father David died. Solomon asked for and received wisdom from the Lord.

### **Initial-problem:**

Solomon began construction of the temple.

### **Final-situation:**

Solomon drafted forced labor for his building projects.

## BIBLE STORY

Solomon began construction of the temple.

Solomon made an agreement with King Hiram of Tyre. King Hiram kept Solomon supplied with cedar and pine logs. Solomon provided Hiram with food and olive oil. King Solomon drafted men as forced laborers from all Israel. Forced laborers worked a month in Lebanon and were home for two months. The craftsmen cut and prepared the timber and stone for the building of the temple (1 Kin 5:1-18).

The temple was ninety feet long, thirty feet wide and forty-five feet high. A wide porch extended out fifteen feet from the temple's front. Solomon built a three-story annex containing side rooms all around the sides and back of the temple. Stone blocks for the temple were finished at the quarry. No hammer, chisel, or other iron tool made a sound at the temple construction site (1 Kin 6:1-10; 2 Chr 3:3-14).

The word of the Lord came to Solomon, "About this temple you're building; what is important is that you obey my commands. Then I'll fulfill through you the promise I gave to your father David. I'll take up my residence among the Israelites and never abandon my people Israel" (1 Kin 6:11-13).

Solomon spent seven years building the temple (1 Kin 6:14-37). Solomon made all the furnishings for the Lord's temple. Solomon completed the temple, brought the items consecrated by David, and placed them in the temple (1 Kin 7:13-51).

King Solomon summoned Israel's leaders to Jerusalem to bring up the Ark of the Lord. Priests carried the Ark, the tabernacle and all its sacred furnishings to the temple. Priests withdrew from the Holy Place and the cloud filled the temple of the Lord (1 Kin 8:1-13).

Solomon faced the people and said, "My father David desired to build a temple for the Lord God of Israel. However, the Lord told my father David, 'Your intentions are good, but you'll not build the temple. Instead, your own son will build the temple for my name.' The Lord has kept his promise. I've taken my father David's place, and I've built the temple for the name of the Lord God of Israel" (1 Kin 8:1-20; 2 Chr 5:2 - 6:11).

Solomon faced the altar and prayed, "Lord God of Israel, there is no god like you in heaven above or on earth below. You've kept your promise to my father David. Listen to my cry as I pray to you today. Hear the plea for mercy that your people Israel and I pray. If your people sin and as a punishment you allow an enemy to defeat your people Israel, and if your people turn to you, pray and plead with you in this temple, then hear them, forgive their sins and bring them back to the land that you gave to their ancestors. If your people sin, and as a punishment you shut the sky and there is no rain, and they pray toward this place, and turn away from their sin because you made them suffer; then hear them, forgive their sins and send rain on the land. If your people sin and as a punishment

you send a disaster; and as a result they repent and pray in or facing the temple; then hear them, forgive their sins and remove the disaster” (1 Kin 8:22-53).

Solomon finished praying and shouted a blessing to the congregation of Israel, “Thanks be to the Lord. May the Lord our God be with us just as he was with our ancestors. May your hearts be committed to the Lord our God. Then you will live by his laws and his commandments” (1 Kin 8:54-61).

King Solomon and all Israel offered sacrifices. They celebrated for fourteen days (1 Kin 8:62-66).

The Lord appeared to Solomon a second time and told him, “I heard your prayer. I’ve declared this temple is holy which you’ve built. If my people sin and I shut the sky so there is no rain, or I send a disaster among my people, and if my people will humble themselves, pray, search for me, and turn from their evil ways, then I’ll hear their prayer, forgive their sins, and heal their country.

“If you and your descendants turn away from me, do not keep my commandments, follow and serve other gods, and worship them, then I’ll cut Israel out of the land I gave them. I’ll reject this temple that I declared holy for my name” (2 Chr 7:11-22; 1 Kin 9:1-9).

It took Solomon thirteen years to build his palace which was 150 feet long, seventy-five feet wide and forty-five feet high. Solomon made another one exactly the same for his wife, Pharaoh’s daughter (1 Kin 7:1-12).

Solomon drafted forced labor for his building projects (1 Kin 9:15-23).

### **GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS**

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story?                  | 5. How did the characters face their problems?                                       |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems?  |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story?                  | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face?                     | 8. What does the story tell about God?   |

### **SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What importance did Solomon give to the temple?
2. What can you learn from Solomon about prayer?
3. What were some of Solomon’s successes?
4. After hearing Solomon’s prayer, what did God tell Solomon?
5. What preconditions did God require in order to fulfill his promises to Solomon?
6. What are some promises with preconditions that God makes to us?
7. What were some of Solomon’s achievements?
8. Feel free to share an experience about God answering your prayer.

## LIFE-LESSONS

1. **God communicates with people.** The Lord communicated with Solomon (1 Kin 3:5, 11-14; 6:11; 11:9-11).
2. **The person who does things for God, yet does not obey the Lord, will not be rewarded by the Lord.** Solomon was advised that the Lord's blessings would not be the result of his building the temple. He would only be blessed if he obeyed the Lord (1 Kin 6:11-13).
3. **People who face trouble should use prayer to redirect their thinking.** In prayer, they look away from the thing that troubles them and look toward God. Solomon suggested again and again that when God's people are in trouble they need to "pray toward" the temple (1 Kin 8:29, 30, 33, 35, 38, 42, 44, 48).
4. **Solomon's prayer for the people of Israel can serve as a model for spiritual leaders who pray for their followers** (1 Kin 8:55-60). Solomon requested: for God to be present with his people (1 Kin 8:56); for the people to have their hearts turned toward God (1 Kin 8:58); for them to obey the Lord's commands (1 Kin 8:58); for God to help with their daily needs (1 Kin 8:59); that all people may know that the Lord is the only true God (1 Kin 8:60).
5. **The precondition for God's presence in a building dedicated to him, is that the worshipers gathered in the building must obey the Lord.** The Lord told Solomon that the important thing was not the temple building but that Solomon obeyed him. The Lord promised his eternal presence as long as one condition was met: the Israelites continued to obey God's commandments (1 Kin 6:11-13). The Lord promised that if Solomon or his descendants did not obey his commandments, then the Lord would reject the temple (1 Kin 9:3-9).
6. **A precondition for receiving blessings from God is being faithful to him.** No descendant of God's servant, nor organization, nor church building can expect God's blessings after abandoning the Lord or disobeying his commands. The Lord promised Solomon that if he obeyed all God commanded, his descendants would govern Israel. But if Solomon were to forsake God's commands and serve other gods, then the Lord would uproot Israel from the land, and would reject the temple (2 Ch 7:11-22; 1 Kin 9:1-9).

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

### **Twitter Prayers** (short, concise prayers):

Invite listeners to pray about the story in “twitter” length prayers. Tell God:

- How they feel about the story.
- How they are similar to or different from Solomon.
- What the story reminds them about a building dedicated to the Lord.
- How the story reminds them of the importance of obeying God.
- Decisions they need to make as a result of hearing the story.
- How the story helps them to know God better.