

## Building On Christ's Foundation

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King Solomon ruled from approximately 967 to 927 BC. That was a 40-year period of his rule. And during that time, as you know, you are very familiar with the story, Israel and King Solomon increased in wealth beyond anything imaginable. He built the Temple, which I would like to get into a little bit of detail on today and show you some of the wealth that was in the Temple. So if you will turn with me now to I Kings 8, I want to begin by showing you what God told Solomon regarding the Temple, and a major requirement that Solomon and the children of Israel were to have as they built the Temple, then after the Temple was completed.

**I Kings 6:12-13** "Concerning this temple which you are building, if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My word with you, which I spoke to your father David. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people Israel."

So basically, what God was telling Solomon there was that you are to walk in righteousness and obey My commandments, keep My statutes. This was a *major* requirement. The children of Israel were not just to build a temple and to do the finest job possible but there was also this requirement of righteousness.

Now, before we get into the righteousness aspect, let us take a look at actually what the children of Israel did in building the Temple. Just very quickly I want to skim through here. In I Kings 6, you will notice at the end of verse 18, it says there was no stone to be seen. So in the building of the Temple, there was a lot of stone masonry work that was used and there was such care given in it or in the fabrication of it that the stones were not even

cut at the site. They were cut away from the site at the quarry and brought to the Temple so that there would not be any noise of chisels and hammers. Everything was fabricated before it got there.

There was no stone to be seen and that was because everything was covered. It was either covered by very expensive wood or a nice cedar wood or it was possibly even covered at times by gold. Let us go through here very quickly and just touch on the items of gold to give you a feel for the amount of work and the amount of money that went into building the Temple.

**I Kings 6:20-22** The inner sanctuary [it gives the size there and then toward the end of verse 20 you will notice he]. . . overlaid it with pure gold, and overlaid the altar of cedar. [So the whole inner sanctuary was overlaid with pure gold and the the altar as well.] So Solomon overlaid the inside of the temple with pure gold. He stretched gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, and he overlaid it with gold. The whole temple he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the temple; also he overlaid with gold the entire altar that was by the inner sanctuary.

You see there, obviously, as you walked into that area or the priests of the inner sanctuary walked in, it just glittered with the sparkle of gold, the beauty of the richest metal known known to us. God had Solomon build it in that way. You will notice down to verse 27 in the room there were two cherubim. Each one was about 15 feet wide, wing tip to wing tip, and 15 feet tall. They were side by side, and they were overlaid with gold as well.

**I Kings 6:30** And the floor of the temple he overlaid with gold, both the inner and outer sanctuaries.

Just the description there of the amount of gold that was used is breathtaking and hard to imagine.

**I Kings 6:32** The two doors were of olive wood; and he carved on them the figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold; and he spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees [and so on].

You can read through there, you will find other items. There was gold used as a very common metal in the Temple. And no doubt, it was just a beautiful, beautiful place to be.

And then in verse 48 of chapter 7, we will notice about the furnishings of the Temple.

**I Kings 7:48-50** Thus Solomon had all furnishings made for the house of the Lord, the altar of gold, and the table of gold on which was the showbread; the lampstands of pure gold, five on the right and five on the left [and so on]. . . . the flowers and the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold; the basins, the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the censers [that was where they burned the fire] of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner room (the Most Holy Place) and for the doors of the main hall of the temple.

So obviously the finest building material available was used to build this Temple. And you would think with the quality and the substance of this Temple that it would stand there forever. But as we will read on it did not, in fact, it did not stand very long as far as its values of gold that was used.

Let us take a look at I Kings 9 and continue the story. Now this is the second time that God spoke to Solomon. Verses 4-5 tell us about the blessing that God will give if the people, if the children of Israel and Solomon live lives of righteousness. Then in verse 6, it talks about the curse that will be brought upon them if they do not. And this is directly related to the Temple itself.

**I Kings 9:6-7** "But if you and your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have said before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house [that is, the Temple] which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples."

There was a condition for that Temple to last and that condition was obedience to God. It was to live their lives in righteousness.

Now, with all Israel's effort and sacrifice, toil, under King Solomon and the greatness that they accomplished as a nation under the rule of Solomon, the blessings that God granted them in that way with all of this, and having the richest Temple ever to be built on earth, Israel thought they would never fail. They were sure that they would live forever because of what they could see physically. But their spiritual lives were a mess.

Turn with me to I Kings chapter 11, beginning in verse 4. We will just skim some verses here to show that Solomon also left and followed other gods.

**I Kings 11:4** For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David.

**I Kings 11:6** Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David.

**I Kings 11:9-10** So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded.

And so the result of that was that God had told Solomon that Israel would be split, that his son would keep one tribe but all the rest of the tribes would be split. And you know the story where later Jeroboam broke away from Rehoboam. Ten tribes went with Jeroboam and Solomon's son Rehoboam ended up with one tribe, the tribe of Judah. And then I think some of the individuals with Benjamin as well stayed with him.

Now, what happened to all that wealth of that Temple later on? Well, if you turn with me to I Kings chapter 14, we will read what happened in verses 25 and 26. This was in approximately 922 BC.

**I Kings 14:25-26** It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made.

The history on this is pretty interesting on what happened to that gold that was carried away. But this happened only five years after Solomon's death, that King Shishak of Egypt carried this wealth away. This was the same king or Pharaoh of Egypt as Shashank the first. Shashank the first and Shishak were the same individual. And within a year later after Shishak king of Egypt took the spoils from the Temple away from Israel and spoiled the Temple and brought it down to nothing, Shishak was dead. Shishak was followed on the Pharaonic throne by his son Osorkon the first, and that was in about 917 BC.

Now directly after Sishak's death and less than a decade after Solomon's death, Osorkon proudly recorded on a granite pillar in the temple of Bubastis his own breathtaking gifts to the goddesses and gods of Egypt. This was recorded and they found it in the archaeology. These gifts included an astonishing 383 tons or 766,000 pounds of gold and silver that this Pharaoh of Egypt gave to the gods and goddesses of Egypt. This was only a little over three years after he began his reign.

Where did that gold and silver come from? Well, it came from the pilfering of the Temple in Jerusalem, as well as the rest that was taken from Israel. So what happened to that gold? It ended up being used to worship foreign gods, all because the nation of Israel and Solomon strayed from God. They did not follow His laws of righteousness.

We sometimes think that God looks upon our material work and is happy with it, but He is not unless the righteousness is there with it. If the righteousness is not there, God is not happy with our gifts.

Let us turn, if you will, to I Corinthians 3 and we will balance this out with how this applies to us today. All that Israel did in building the Temple, all their effort was in vain because of their lack of righteousness.

**I Corinthians 3:8** . . . each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

That is absolutely a true statement, as you know, it is in the Bible, but there is a qualification of that and the qualification is, what are we building our foundation on?

**I Corinthians 3:9-11** For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. [We are God's temple.] According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder [this is Paul speaking to the Corinthians], I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

So Jesus Christ and the righteousness of Jesus Christ is to be the foundation on which this temple is built, the temple of God's church as well as our individual lives.

**Ephesians 2:20** [the saints] having been built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

Christ is not just the foundation, He is not just a cornerstone, but He is the Chief Cornerstone upon which the prophets and the apostles have built upon. So we are to take what we read by the apostles and the prophets in God's Word and we are to use *that* in developing the righteousness of Christ with the help of God.

**I Corinthians 3:12-13** Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear, for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

**I Peter 1:7** that the genuineness of your faith, being more precious than gold which perishes. . .

**I Corinthians 3:14** If anyone's work which he has built on it [or on the foundation of Jesus Christ, that righteousness] endures, he will receive a reward.

**I Corinthians 3:16-17** Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles [or destroys] the temple of God [that could be through persecution or that could be through martyrdom or that could be by individuals just not working hard to acquire the righteousness of Christ and to be obedient to God] God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are

So we see there that our works require more than just our efforts. It requires more than just putting forth the effort to get God's Word out or serving in God's church. It requires more than that, more than the physical activity. It requires us working hard to have that righteousness of Jesus Christ, that cornerstone, that foundation that we are to build our lives on. And all the gifts, all the wealth of the world, are not pleasing to God and will not last unless those gifts are built upon righteousness, upon the foundation of Jesus Christ.

Now, as the temple of God, if we submit to God, He will build our foundation on Jesus Christ. It will be an everlasting foundation of righteousness and it will be impossible to destroy.