

THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL

A KINGDOM established

GOD ALL WISE

Solomon Builds the Temple

Today, we will look into the temple Solomon built. It would be the temple that his father David had longed to build for God. David came to the realization that while he lived in a house of cedar there was no permanent place to carry on the work of the LORD. David's attitude reminds us that it should always be in our heart to give our best to our Savior! However, we also learned how David's dream of building the temple was not God's plan for him. The LORD would use David's son to build a 'permanent' temple – if you can call anything in this world 'permanent'. His temple did last approximately 400 years. Up until Solomon built the temple, God had revealed the Glory of His Presence in the tent of meeting or tabernacle which Moses first constructed. **Exodus 25:8 (ESV)**⁸ *And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.*

Solomon's temple would be the first of three historic temples built during Old Testament times. All three were located on a prominent hill north of Jerusalem. David had acquired the temple mound from Araunah the Jebusite. **2 Chronicles 3:1 (ESV)**¹ *Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to David his father...*

As I began preparation for this lesson, I came across an interesting tidbit. **1 Kings 6:7 (ESV)**⁷ *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.* They had so much respect and reverence for God that the stones were pre-cut off site. This would eliminate the hammering noise as the Temple was erected. This reminds me of **Psalms 46:10 (ESV)**¹⁰ *“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”* And also the silence during the building of the temple reminds me of an experience that the prophet Elijah had. **1 Kings 19:12-13 (ESV)**¹² *And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper.*¹³ *And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him...* The LORD often speaks so quietly we must listen intently to hear a Word from Him.

Even Solomon knew way back in Old Testament times as he built the temple for the glory of God this His glory can never be contained in any building. Solomon said in **2 Chronicles 6:18 (ESV)**¹⁸ *“But will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this house that I have built!*

In Genesis, God tells us that He walked personally in the garden with Adam and Eve and then their sin separated them from God's glory. Later the glory of the Presence of the LORD dwelt among men in a portable tent and then in the temple Solomon built. All of this becomes the 'back story' for the coming of God's Presence to dwell on earth in a new way. **John 1:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.* Jesus the Son of God dwelled on earth in the tent of human flesh. After Jesus ascended to the Father in heaven, He made a way for the very Presence of God to dwell in those who accept Him as Savior and Lord. **1 Corinthians 3:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?* This is one way that others see the glory of God in our world – they see it through us! **Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *"You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

The temple (then and now) bears God's name.

Read 1 Kings 5:1-5 (ESV) ¹ *Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, for Hiram always loved David.* ² *And Solomon sent word to Hiram,* ³ *"You know that David my father could not build a house for the name of the LORD his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him..."* ⁴ *But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side....* ⁵ *And so I intend to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD said to David my father..., 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, shall build the house for my name.'*

David had a good relationship with Hiram king of Tyre and Solomon continued that business relationship. I can't help but think that David and Hiram's relationship went beyond business because God's Word tells us that *Hiram always loved David*. Hiram was a Phoenician. The Phoenicians produced among other things purple dye and fabrics and metal goods. Tyre was a place of wealth defended by great warriors. The Phoenicians did not worship Jehovah. Yet, the light of David's love had an impact on this king's life.

Until the work was completed, King Hiram personally received approximately 125,000 bushels of wheat and 115,000 gallons of pure olive oil annually. Hiram's workers would receive similar payments to be divided among them. In exchange Hiram's men would cut cedar trees in Lebanon, prepared as logs, and then took them down the coast to Joppa either on ships or bound together as rafts. At Joppa Solomon's men would claim the timber and transport it overland to the building site, about thirty-five miles away. It is interesting to note that the Old Testament temple was built in part by the riches and labor of Gentiles. In the New Testament, Gentile flesh would become temples of the Living God! The temple (then and now) hosts God's Presence.

Read 1 Kings 8:10-14 (ESV) ¹⁰ *And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD,* ¹¹ *so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory*

of the LORD filled the house of the LORD. ¹² Then Solomon said, “The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. ¹³ I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.” ¹⁴ Then the king turned around and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel stood.

This passage is taken from the day that the Ark of the Covenant was brought into the temple. Matthew Henry writes, “The temple, though richly beautified, yet while it was without the ark was like a body without a soul, or a candlestick without a candle, or (to speak more properly) a house without an inhabitant.” As the priests came out of the Holy Place, the Presence of the LORD took possession of it by a cloud.

Solomon said, “The LORD has said that he would dwell in thick darkness.” Why speak of darkness when they had just beheld God's radiant glory? There are several references in Exodus regarding the LORD dwelling in a cloud of darkness. For example, **Exodus 20:21 (ESV)** ²¹ *The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.* When Moses went into the dark cloud on Mt. Sinai, he went into the darkness with fear. David wrote in **Psalm 18:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ *He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him, thick clouds dark with water.* There is a mystery about God that humbles us. And yet, in the New Testament we are told in **1 John 1:5 (ESV)** ⁵ *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* As I think of the LORD dwelling in a cloud of darkness and then being the God of Light, I am reminded of Peter's words in **1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

The temple (then and now) is for God's mission.

Read 1 Kings 8:54-61 (ESV) ⁵⁴ *Now as Solomon finished offering all this prayer and plea to the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had knelt with hands outstretched toward heaven.* ⁵⁵ *And he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying,* ⁵⁶ *“Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant.* ⁵⁷ *The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. May he not leave us or forsake us,* ⁵⁸ *that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules, which he commanded our fathers.* ⁵⁹ *Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires,* ⁶⁰ *that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other.* ⁶¹ *Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.”*

The king had been kneeling on the special platform near the altar, his hands lifted to God, but now he stood to give the people a blessing from the LORD. Usually it was the priests who blessed the people, but on this special day of the temple dedication, Solomon blessed the nation, and he gave thanks to God for His great mercies. Solomon realized that the promises of God had never failed. God's people had often failed the LORD, but He had never failed them. In fact, they were now a nation at rest as God had promised Moses. **Exodus 33:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."*

Our Gospel Project writers point out how we do not normally associate the nation of Israel with the term 'mission' especially in regards to the temple. But, let's zero in on perhaps the most important portion of Solomon's prayer: *that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other.* Solomon knew all those centuries ago that the Creator of heaven and earth was not for just one specific people group. It was always part of God's plan that all people of the earth would know Him.

We read in **Psalms 67:1-2 (ESV)** ¹ *May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah* ² *that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.* The prophet Isaiah foretold that Israel's mission was to be light to the Gentiles. **Isaiah 42:6 (ESV)** ⁶ *"I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations,*

At the beginning of the New Testament story of Jesus we read the proclamation of an old Jew named Simeon at Jesus' dedication in the temple in **Luke 2:30-32 (ESV)** ³⁰ *for my eyes have seen your salvation* ³¹ *that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,* ³² *a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."*

Somehow along the way the Israelites lost sight of the fact that their mission was to bring the good news of God's great salvation to all people not just a chosen few. When God's Temple, Jesus, came to dwell on earth, the nation as a whole missed God's Presence in the Temple God built – that is in His Son – Jesus.

Today, we are God's Temple. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,* ²⁰ *for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

And the question each of us must answer is this: "is the world missing God's Presence in the temple of my body and the temple of my life?"

Let's live our lives in such a manner that we become the 21st century answer to Solomon's prayer of so long ago: *that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other.*