

1ST KINGS

Week 10, chapter 6 continued

This chapter and the next one are all about building God's Temple and so we're going to take considerable time with it because so many principles and challenging issues pop out of the woodwork as we examine this important section of Holy Scripture. We took a little detour to end last week's lesson (and we'll take a few more today!) that discussed the issue of Bible chronology and how the reign of kings (both Hebrew kings and gentile kings) played the central role in determining the dates concerning biblical events that we see quoted in textbooks. And this is because while oftentimes we'll see the day and the month of an event recorded in the Bible, we don't get a date that involves a calendar year. And if we do get a year it is nearly always in relation to the reign of some king or another (the 1st year of a king, the 10th year of his reign, etc.).

There were 5 standard protocols used in ancient days to define the length of reign of a king: **Regnal, Accession year, Post-dating, Nonaccession year, and Co-regency** (you can review last week's lesson if you want to know more about these protocols). And it is nearly impossible in most cases to know which of these methods is being used to report the reign of a particular king in the Bible, but we can be sure that all 5 methods are mixed in there somewhere. The bottom line was that we shouldn't get too rigid and have intense and divisive arguments over dates and calendars of ancient times because much of it involves speculation and guesswork (even if it is educated guessing). However, much of the problem we have today of getting it right lies on the gentile side of the equation. Gentiles have for centuries wanted to approach the Bible as though the Hebrew culture in which it was written could be ignored and thus we have not bothered to consult ancient Hebrew records or ask learned Jews about calendar and chronology issues most of which they well understand.

Modern Christians and Messianics have great interest in Bible chronology and the order that things happened, and it **is** quite helpful if we can get a good idea of the timing of these important events. Fortunately as the books of the Old Testament roll by, and as we enter the time of the kings of Israel, we can get the accuracy into a very narrow range of probably 5 years (plus or minus a bit). We're going to delve into a few more calendar and dating issues as we proceed and I think you'll find this information useful for all of your Bible studies and for

helping to establish context.

As we began 1st Kings 6 we're told of the commencement of construction for the Temple. We are going to go over the construction in some detail. It is recorded that it was in the 480th year after the people (the **'am**) left Egypt that construction began. We're also told that this happened in the 4th year of Solomon's reign, even given the month of **Ziv** to narrow it down further. As we discussed last week, exactly what constitutes "the beginning of construction" is not known. Even though near the end of this chapter it says that the foundation was laid in the month of **Ziv** in the 4th year of Solomon's reign, it is hard to understand just what that means because there is no way that the large limestone blocks were quarried, delivered to the site, the foundation dug, and the stones placed in but one month. Nonetheless, the 2nd month of the Jewish year in the 4th year of Solomon's reign is considered a kind of ceremonial commencement date for building the 1st Temple so that's what we need to work from.

The month of **Ziv** is the same as the month of **Iyar**. **Ziv** is the name for this month used by Israel before they were exiled to Babylon. After their exile they adopted the Babylonian names for the months of the year. **Ziv** is Hebrew, **Iyar** is Babylonian (technically it is Chaldean) and it is the equivalent to our modern May-June timeframe. **Ziv** means brilliance or splendor, and it is an apt name for a springtime month with the bursting forth of flowers and crops, and the birth of new life throughout the animal kingdom.

If we assume that Solomon's reign started in 971 B.C. (a generally accepted date plus or minus a couple of years), and we believe the Scriptures that in the 4th year of his reign the construction began, then we can assign an approximate date of 967 B.C. that the foundation for the 1st Temple was laid. If we then accept that the statement that the start-date was 480 years after leaving Egypt, then we can date the Exodus to 1459 B.C. But is that correct? Most modern Christian scholars don't accept this because they think the Exodus was closer to 1250 B.C.

Let me explain something about Bible chronology that I haven't talked about in quite a long time. It is commonly said among Bible scholars that the calendar used in the Bible is the Jewish or Hebrew or Biblical calendar, which is a lunar calendar. A lunar month is 29 ½ days (one full cycle of the moon), and thus if one assumes a 12 month year, then 12 times 29 ½ equals 354 days. Of course today we calculate a year (correctly) as 365 days, so the standard statement is that a Bible year is shorter than a modern year (by 11 days) and so when the Bible gives us some number of years we have to adjust by assuming fewer years than what is stated. Thus, for instance, if the Bible says 100 years they are really speaking of 35,400 days (100 times 354 days) not 36,500 days (100 times 365 days). So by modern calendars 100

Bible years is really only 97 actual years. Thus in our case since the Bible records 480 years since the Exodus then that amounts to really only 466 years.

Here's the issue: 365 days is a solar year and has nothing to do with counting lunar cycles. A solar year is the time (measured in days) that it takes for the earth to orbit the Sun 1 complete cycle. As I already said, a lunar year is simply 12 months of 29 ½ day lunar cycles, which adds up to 354 days. So in modern times we don't consider the moon cycles whatsoever in calculating a year, and we also don't even use them to calculate the length of a month.

Up through Christ's era, months alternated in their length in that one month was 29 days, then the next month was 30 days and then the cycle repeated. Why do it this way? Because it is not possible to have a month consisting of 29 full days plus ½ of a day. That would have us changing months halfway through the next day. So by having one month of 29 days and the next at 30, you wind up with an average of 29 ½. It's not perfectly accurate but it works. And this was done because up to this point in history one month was defined as being one cycle of the moon. Therefore the first day of each month was the new moon, and exactly halfway through every month was a full moon. It never changed. But in 45 B.C. Julius Caesar had decreed that the Roman Empire would adopt a new universal calendar based entirely on the Sun cycle and so the lunar cycle would no longer play a role in determining months or years. Part of the reason for this is that the Romans were Sun worshippers while most other cultures were moon worshipper. So it made sense that ordering their year was based on the movement of their god through the sky.

Thus while the idea of dividing a year into 12 months was retained by Caesar, under the Roman system months were assigned differing numbers of days (28, 29, 30, or 31 days) that when added up equaled 365 (1 Sun cycle). But here's the fallacy: the so-called Jewish (Biblical) calendar is NOT based solely on moon cycles as gentile Christian Bible scholars claim. These ancient people weren't ignorant; they understood the movement of the Sun and understood a year was longer than 12 lunar months (longer than 354 days). They well understood that a solar year was 365 days and so they regularly added extra days to the end of the calendar year, and at times an extra full month to adjust. That's right; the Hebrew calendar has an extra month added to it 7 times during a 19 year cycle. In a cycle of 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17, and 19 years, an extra month is added called Adar Bet, thus occasionally giving them a 13-month year. And it is done for a most practical reason: had they used only the lunar cycle to determine months and years and disregarded the solar cycle, the Biblical Feasts would soon begin to fall in the wrong season! Because the Biblical Feasts were agricultural festivals based on agricultural growing seasons of the year, and certain firstfruits of the harvest had to be offered at the Temple according to Torah Law, what would happen if the Festival of Firstfruits for instance (a springtime festival that is to occur on Nissan 16th) in time found itself occurring in mid-summer or (worse) in mid-winter? In other words it is inevitable that because

lunar cycles and solar cycles don't line up, then according to the fixed calendar dates of the Torah the seasons would be constantly moving around, changing at the rate of 11 days per year.

So in our modern era, as in ancient times, the Jewish Calendar STILL uses lunar cycles to determine months (the month changes precisely in tune with the moon), but the Jewish Calendar also STILL observes the solar cycle and adjusts their lunar calendar about every 3 years to keep the two in approximate relationship, just as they did in ancient Biblical times. Bottom line: for all practical purposes a Biblical or Jewish year is the same as a modern era year. There is no adjustment needed. So we can use the years just as they are presented in the Bible without alteration.

Let's read 1st Kings 6 from the beginning.

READ 1ST KINGS CHAPTER 6 all

Verse 2 tells us the basic size of the main structure of the Temple; it is 60 cubits long by 20 cubits wide and 30 cubits high. Most modern Bibles will convert cubits to feet; but this conversion produces controversial numbers. The problem is that a cubit was not a standardized measurement; it could denote a certain length in one society or nation that was different from that of another society or nation. Even more, it was common that each society observed a regular cubit and a royal cubit (the royal cubit always being the longer). A cubit was generally defined as the length from a man's fingertips to his elbow. So the farther back we go in time, a cubit was more approximate rather than exact, but eventually a precise standard for a cubit was established on a nation by nation basis.

There is much disagreement over which cubit is being used in the building of Solomon's Temple. I'm not going to get into the debate because there is no way to know for sure. In modern terms, the various cubits ranged from a little over 17" to a little under 24". If we take a middle ground of around 20" we find that the Temple would be 100 feet long, 33 feet wide, and 50 feet high. The CJB uses the Egyptian Royal cubit of 20 ½ inches. So for the sake of simplicity from here on we're going to use the CJB numbers. So what we instantly see is that the main Temple building would be a modest 3675 square feet.

The first interesting thing to note is that the new Temple structure is exactly twice the size of the Wilderness Tabernacle that it is replacing; thus we can know that the tent was a little over 1800 square feet. Exodus 26 says the Tabernacle was 30 by 10 cubits, Solomon's Temple is 60 by 20. The Tabernacle's Holy of Holies was 10 by 10 cubits, Solomon's Temple was 20 by 20. The Tabernacle's outer room was 20 by 10 cubits, the new Temple would be 40 by 20. So we can see that while the Temple is much larger, the proportions were maintained. There is nothing wrong with this doubling of size; the Exodus measurements were for the sacred tent (***Mishkan***) that had to be packed up for travel with Israel in the wilderness; the Temple was a permanent structure and so its size isn't restricted by practicality.

The term we'll see throughout this story of the Temple's construction is the house of Adonai or the house of the Lord; or in Hebrew, ***Beit Yehoveh***. And this of course reflected the common belief of the time that a god literally resided within the temple that his or her worshippers built for them. Thus the worshippers would bring their god all the comforts of life such as soft couches to lie on, the best food to eat and the highest grade wine to drink and even human women (or men) for them to consort with. Of course the Hebrew God YHWH made it clear that He does not reside in houses built by human hands, but rather He lives in heaven.

CJB Isaiah 66:1 *"Heaven is my throne," says ADONAI, "and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house could you build for me? What sort of place could you devise for my rest?"*

Even Solomon who was putting out this incredible amount of his time and the kingdom's wealth to build this amazing building inherently knew that while more than 100 times in the Scriptures the ***Mishkan*** is indeed called God's dwelling place, the term is a euphemism and not literal. In fact in 1st Kings 8 Solomon is recorded as saying:

1Kings 8:27-30 CJB

27 "But can God actually live on the earth? Why, heaven itself, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain you; so how much less this house I have built?"

28 Even so, ADONAI my God, pay attention to your servant's prayer and plea, listen to the cry and prayer that your servant is praying before you today,

29 that your eyes will be open toward this house night and day- toward the place concerning which you said, 'My name will be there'- to listen to the prayer your servant will pray toward this place.

30 Yes, listen to the plea of your servant, and also that of your people Isra'el when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven where you live; and when you hear, forgive!

Another interesting factor before we get into the actual details of the Temple is its location; we don't find the location described here in 1st Kings. As a result we'll find Bible commentators making all sorts of speculations of where it must have been, and many claiming that it was somewhere down the hill from where the Temple Mount is located today. All that is needed to clear this up is to refer to 2 Chronicles 3, the parallel account of this event, to get the answer.

CJB 2 Chronicles 3:1 Then Shlomo began to build the house of ADONAI in Yerushalayim on Mount Moriyah, where ADONAI had appeared to David his father. Provision had been made for this at the place David had chosen, the threshing-floor of Ornan the Y'vusi.

Matter solved. Even more, we are fortunate that in our time walls of Solomon's Temple have been uncovered and within the last few days an entire new section of the Davidson Archeological Garden inside the Old City of Jerusalem has been opened, which reveals walls from Solomon's era. These are just below and adjacent to the Temple Mount and probably were part of Solomon's palace complex. There is little doubt (except by the most extreme skeptics or those politically pre-disposed) that Solomon's Temple was built right where the Temple Mount is today.

The Temple entrance was from the east. Thus a priest walking in would be facing west. This means that the Ark of the Covenant was also facing east. We've talked numerous times about the mysterious use of the direction east in the Bible as being important to the Lord. Note that when Yeshua returns he will enter through the eastern gate of the Old City.

Verse 3 describes another structure that some translators call a porch, some a hall, and others a vestibule or portico. This structure was at the front of the main Temple building (on the east side) so that a person had to pass through this porch or hall to gain entry into the Temple proper. There are no doors described, no sidewalls, and therefore it probably had no ceiling (but might have).

We're going to see some other structures attached to the main Temple structure thus we will wind up with a Temple complex; so the area of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies is identified as the **Hekal** to distinguish it from the other structures of the Temple complex. And located in this **Hekal**, verse 4 speaks of windows. These windows would have been very high up (because there were tall structures attached to the exterior northern and southern side walls of the **Hekal**). Thus even though many translations (including our CJB) say that the windows were narrow on the outside and wide on the inside (this is the way that special portals were made on the defensive walls of walled cities), that is merely a guess. And along with many other Bible teachers I think this makes no sense. The description of the window construction is probably referring to lattice work that covers the windows. There is no reason to make windows in the Temple in a manner that would reduce light and airflow, nor would they be designed as defensive positions for soldiers who wouldn't be allowed inside the Holy Place for any reason.

Yet another Temple complex structure is identified and it is called the annex. The annex was built using cells (partitions) that were probably built for storage and perhaps some used as a work space for the Levites or priests. This annex encompassed 3/4ths of the exterior of this building; it was constructed on the west, north, and south sides. And this annex was built in a very unique way, in a reverse step configuration. In other words, one would think that when building a multi-story structure that either all floors would be of the same dimensions or the lowest floor would be the widest and the next floor a little less wide and so on. But this was built with the lowest floor as the narrowest and the top floor as the widest.

And verse 6 explains that this was so that the Temple walls (the **Hekal** walls) would not be "defaced" by having supporting beams for the annex stuck through them. So the walls of the **Hekal** were built 7 cubits thick at the bottom, and then after 5 cubits of elevation the wall became 6 cubits thick. Five more cubits of elevation the Temple walls reduced to 5 cubits of thickness and finally at the top became 4. So the western, northern and southern walls were built like a step pyramid. This enabled the supporting beams for the annex to be LAID upon the ledges created by these steps rather than them becoming a literal part of the Temple structure. Therefore the annex's floors were (from lowest to highest) 5, 6, and finally 7 cubits in width.

Verse 7 explains that quarry stones were used for the wall construction, but no iron chisel or tool was heard in the house (the Temple) while it was being built. The Sages explain that this was an extra measure of caution and sanctity that Solomon employed based on the principle that no iron tool was to be used on the stones for the Altar. However this prohibition did NOT apply to the Temple. So while at the quarry site iron tools were used on the Temple stones, they had to be precisely made there and only later transported to the Temple building site. There they were fit together in precise order; they had been so expertly made that they simply

lay into their proper place without modification.

After explaining in verse 8 that the entrance into the outer annex was from the outside (and not from inside of the Temple), the ceiling becomes the subject. The ceiling was built using multiple layers much like the ceiling of the Wilderness Tabernacle. Highly decorated cedar panels were visible inside the Temple, and they were attached to another layer of cedar planks that acted as the Temple roof.

When we get to verse 11 there is a sudden interruption in the narrative of the Temple construction and Solomon is given a prophetic message from God, no doubt through a prophet; the Sages say that this prophet was **Ahiyah** the Shilonite. This divine oracle carries a meaning that we all need to pay attention to. The Lord essentially warns **Shlomo** that with all the care and expense and focus that he is lavishing on this Temple project that he needs to remember something important: it is that trusting God and following His Torah commands is what will bring about the divine promise made to his father David. And that promise was that the Lord would dwell among His people Israel and would not abandon them. The implication is unmistakable: Yehoveh is noticing that Solomon was beginning to count more on his industrious works and his merit and the spending of his (and his people's) wealth in order to impress God. Sounding righteous, looking righteous, building a grand structure that Solomon would get the credit for; requiring thousands of his citizens to sacrifice their personal time, skills, and money for his grand plan. How much of this was about God and how much was about Solomon becoming envied and famous the world over?

But even more, after spending all this time and effort would Solomon now expect that THIS is what would induce Yehoveh to continue the Davidic Dynasty and favor **Shlomo** and Israel? How could God possibly refuse to do so after Solomon has spent such great energy for God's house? You see, this is what too many of us do subconsciously. We write big checks, we come to our places of worship every time they open the doors, we teach a Sunday School class for years, we volunteer for mission trips, we wear the biggest most expensive crosses or Stars of David around our necks, our homes are filled with Biblical icons everywhere, we plaster our cars with religious bumper stickers, we travel to Israel regularly, and we appear to be the most godly and pious person on our block. But are we? What is our true motive for doing these things? The Lord measures us by our faith and trust in Him; He also measures us by our humility before Him and by our grateful obedience with Spirit-led submission to His timeless and immutable regulations and commandments.

CJB 1 Samuel 15:22 *Sh'mu'el said, "Does ADONAI take as much pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying what ADONAI says? Surely obeying is better than*

sacrifice, and heeding orders than the fat of rams.

In one sense the Temple was built as the authorized location for sacrifice and atonement, but in that sense it was only needed because God's people shunned obedience and instead sinned. Was Solomon doing something wrong in straining so mightily to build for God this beautiful edifice? No. Are we doing something wrong by giving until it hurts, or by serving every hour that we are able, or by going on mission trips or visiting Israel often to show our support? No. The question is: what do we expect from God in return for our efforts and behavior? Can we substitute never ending works and pious behavior for trust in Him, in His Son, and in His written Word? Can we make-up for our sins by means of our good deeds and tireless work? The answer to that is "no" as well.

I have known a number of Believers who daily live a less than upright lifestyle, but then go on a mission trip for a few days, speak glowingly of the Lord over and over to scores or hundreds of people, hand out tracts and perhaps give out food or medical care, and then come back home and return to that same questionable lifestyle. I've also known many folks who give and give in innumerable ways and then are perplexed and bitter when something bad happens to them (that they think shouldn't have), because deep down they thought their activities amounted to the purchase of divine protection and immunity from trouble. You know: they were doing their part so how come God didn't do His part? I did all this for you, God, so why won't you do what I think you ought to do and keep me healthy and prosperous?

But God looks at the heart; and when He looked at Solomon He saw less than pure motives at work. And of course as we continue our study of the Book of Kings we'll watch **Shlomo** slide into idolatry and all manner of detestable behavior, all the while indignantly denying it and even doing some of it in the name of God.

The next several verses resume with Temple construction as concerns the interior of the Temple. And without getting into too much detail we can say that enormous quantities of gold were used and much ornamentation was employed. The Cedar wood paneling was used mostly as an underlayment to cover the stone walls so that gold sheeting could be attached. The idea was that beautiful designs would be expertly carved into wood paneling, the paneling would be attached to the stone structure (to fully cover it over), and then thin gold leaf would be carefully applied to entirely cover the walls as it followed the delicate contours of the paneling's carvings.

We'll continue with this next week.