

1. My title for this lesson is, "What else did Solomon build?" To explain that title, we need to review a little of where we left off in the book. The previous two chapters focused on Solomon planning and supervising the construction of the first "permanent" temple in Israel. Chapter 7 then says in effect, while Solomon was in a construction mood, here is what else he built. This list included his residence, his "office" where he would judge as the king and a house for the daughter of Pharaoh who Solomon married most likely as a business arrangement. This chapter finishes by describing some of the furnishings that were built to be used in the official temple in Israel.
  - a) My difficult task in this lesson is to ask why we should care. If this chapter is part of the bible, why does God want us know all of these details about things Solomon had built in his lifetime how are they significant to our lives? If this is just a construction journal for a king, why is this any more significant than what any Roman emperor built or what any of the Pharaoh's of Egypt built or for that matter even any of our current leaders did? To put it simply, why should we care what Solomon built?
  - b) Part of the answer is to show us that Solomon really did have unlimited wealth. He used that wealth to build great building projects. I was also thinking that throughout history, many political leaders have been accused of having "Messiah Syndrome" which is when one's ego gets so big, they start to think that they alone are the Promised One to rule over the world or at least their corner of it. While this syndrome can correctly describe many political leaders, Solomon happened to be the next king after God literally told his father David that a descendant of his will rule forever. Therefore, I think Solomon was thinking that if I'm not him, at the least I can build great building projects to remind future Israelite kings that God does rule over people and He will bring "The" Messiah into the world one day. In the meantime we are stuck with Solomon and whoever is ruling over us now.
  - c) This reminds me of a great expression to describe how Christians should view politics: I have been taught many years ago, "I am not a Democrat or a Republican, I'm a theocrat". That means I choose to live under a king and Jesus is my king. I try to keep that in mind when the people I vote for do not win the most recent elections. I remembering hearing pastor John MacArthur say on his radio show one time, there are only two kingdoms in this world, God's and Satan's and it is a matter of at any one time working to build up one or the other. I try to keep that in mind again, when I'm too worried about political issues.
2. Meanwhile, back to Solomon. I posed the question, why is it we should care about the things that he built roughly 3,000 years ago. Let's be honest, other than a few archeological remnants, this is all long gone. To state the obvious, Jesus Second Coming hasn't happened yet or for my Jewish readers, "the" Messiah hasn't come yet to rule the world from Jerusalem. So if Solomon built all of this in preparation of the Messiah, and for the practical reasons of a place for Solomon to live, rule and work, why should we care? To truly explain it is it is best to go through this lesson. My short answer after studying this chapter is first, it shows us that God desires we think about Him as we work on different projects in our lives. This construction project reminded me that if I am a committed Christian, I should regularly remember that I am a "theocrat" who desires God to rule over my life. It's not the construction details that He wants us to remember, but the fact that He wants to be in charge of our lives. That's what these great building projects remind us as we read about them in this chapter.
  - a) What I ask is that you follow along with me as we go through the details of these things that Solomon had built, not so we become experts on biblical history, but that we get an idea of how God wants us to focus on Him with our lives. These items remind us that He is there, He desires to be in charge of our lives and finally, letting Him rule over us is the best way for us to live. With that said, it's time to describe the construction details of the other things at Solomon built in his reign as the Israelite king.

3. Verse 1: It took Solomon thirteen years, however, to complete the construction of his palace.
  - a) To understand Verse 1, one has to read it in contrast to the last verse of the last chapter. In that verse it said, "He had spent seven years building it" referring to the temple.
    - i) The optimist view here is that Solomon cared more the temple than his own house and therefore he first spent seven years building the temple first and then he spent thirteen years building his own home, place of work and other things.
    - ii) The pessimist view is that Solomon cared more about building his own house then he did the temple and he spent many more years on his own building project than he did on the temple project.
    - iii) First Kings 9:10 says that the total time for both projects was twenty years and that tells us Solomon didn't start this second project (described here in Chapter 7) until he finished the first project of the Temple as described in Chapters 5 and 6.
    - iv) As to what did Solomon care more about, I'll let you judge as we go through all of the details of Solomon's second great building project as describe in this chapter.
  - b) OK then, let's come back to the "why" question. Why should we care that Solomon spent all of those years building his house and his place of work? The answer historically was for Jewish people to see where Israel "was" as a great kingdom and how low they fell over the next few hundred years to a point where they were conquered. The related point for you and me is to remember that 1st and 2nd Kings is in effect one big study of the danger of turning from the way God wants us to live versus trying to live a life where we ignore what is His will for our lives.
    - i) In effect, this comes back to my introduction point about politics. One can think of our world as two competing kingdoms vying for the souls of people. It's like John MacArthur's comment about our world consisting of "The Kingdom of God" and Satan's kingdom. (That is based on Matthew 12:26 to 12:28).
    - ii) So what does doing God's will and Solomon's building projects have in common? The answer is until Jesus return, we live to serve God's kingdom. Solomon built a lot of his projects to remind people that God rules over the world even though he's the currently king of that country. We'll read of Solomon building big palaces for him to live and rule from as well as a place to remind visitors that God rules over our lives no matter who is the current ruler over our land.
    - iii) Does this mean God wants us to build say a big church or a big house to live in? I guess it depends upon our budget or the size of our congregation. Modern church buildings tend to be more practical in design than say works of art. My view any building project (be it personal or for our church) is to pray one's way through it, do what one can afford, and ask God to bless it or block it. Then we move forward and let God guide us as to what is best. Again, it comes back to always asking if we are working at any moment for "His kingdom" or well, "the other kingdom".
    - iv) Meanwhile, Verse 2.
4. Verse 2: He built the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon a hundred cubits long, fifty wide and thirty high, with four rows of cedar columns supporting trimmed cedar beams. <sup>3</sup> It was roofed with cedar above the beams that rested on the columns--forty-five beams, fifteen to a row. <sup>4</sup> Its windows were placed high in sets of three, facing each other. <sup>5</sup> All the doorways had rectangular frames; they were in the front part in sets of three, facing each other.
  - a) After one whole verse (Verse 1) on Solomon's personal residence, we now get a bunch of verses describing another building Solomon built probably next to his personal residence. If you have ever played with "Lincoln Logs" as a child that game might help you visualize this construction description. What we have here is a building held up by three rows of 15 large wood columns. More cedar wood was used to make the roof and to make the wood frame. To say all of this it another way, Solomon imported a lot more Lebanon cedar trees to build this building.

- b) OK John, we get the idea that after Solomon finished building the temple, he kept going with the tree importing business and used more wood to build this building next to his house. So can you tell us why all of these construction details are in the bible and why we should care?
    - i) Remember how I said, "I am not a Democrat or a Republican, but a theocrat"? That means as a Christian, I desire to live under a kingdom where Jesus is my king. Now here are the Israelites living under a kingdom, and Solomon the king has peace all around him and he is building (overseeing) the official places where he will rule and administer justice from.
    - ii) So are you saying when we get to heaven, Jesus will rule from a building just like this one? I have no idea, and truthfully I don't care. What I suspect is when Jesus returns as the Messiah to rule over the earth, He will still be "fully human as well as fully God". That means he needs a place to live and a place to rule from.
    - iii) Just as a magnificent structure was built back then for the first king of peace to rule from, so another magnificent structure will be built when the Messianic age starts.
    - iv) Think of this structure another way. It was built with non-Jewish material (that is trees from Lebanon) under the guidance of a Jewish king to worship a Jewish God. Now think of Christians as supporting that Jewish structure to worship that God.
    - v) So if this structure and the other things we will read that Solomon oversaw being built in this chapter represent our "support" of worshiping God, how does any of that affect our lives today? Does God want us to say, build our churches exactly like this structure? No. The idea is to realize that just as the cedar trees were the finest building materials available at that time, so God wants us to give our all and our best to Him so that He can rule over our lives. Does that mean you want us to say give all of our money to God? No, it's realize all we own belongs to God in the first place and He gives us our resources in order to make a difference for Him in this world. Consider that if we do desire to live in a theocracy (that means living under a king's rule), then it should be our primary desire to serve that king, which is God, and then let Him be in charge of what we do with our resources.
  - c) All of that theology leads me back to this temple structure. Solomon wanted the Israelites to realize that they didn't live to serve him but to serve God. That concept of serving God did apply to Solomon himself as well as the priests and all the Israelites themselves. The idea was to make something special and use the best materials available to remember that we serve God and live under His authority and His direction for how we live our lives.
  - d) With that said, it is time to get back to Solomon's construction details.
5. Verse 6: He made a colonnade fifty cubits long and thirty wide. In front of it was a portico, and in front of that were pillars and an overhanging roof.
- a) In real estate appraiser terminology, Solomon also built a patio and a walkway that was 50 cubits (about 75 feet) long by 45 feet wide. In front of this walkway were big pillars and a roof covering.
  - b) All right John, to remind you again, most of us are not real estate appraisers, nor are we interested in all of these construction details. Why should we care? The idea is when we approach God it is to be taken seriously. Visualize approaching God by walking through this special entrance. Does that mean we can't approach Him whenever we desire to? Of course not. The best way to describe this is to remember two key facts about approaching God in prayer. The first is that He is an all-loving father who cares about us deeply and He wants a personal relationship with us. The other factor that has to be balanced with that is the concept that God is holy. What I mean by that is that God can't stand any sin whatsoever. That's why we must confess our sins to Him.
  - c) I bring that up here is to visualize the idea that God wants us to approach Him, but at the same time He is "special" and this special entrance is used to approach our king.

6. Verse 7: He built the throne hall, the Hall of Justice, where he was to judge, and he covered it with cedar from floor to ceiling.
  - a) This is a big room that Solomon built as a place where he is to administer justice. It may help to recall that a Jewish king was not only a government ruler, but also the only judge of the "Supreme Court" of that land. That means if one had a legal dispute, or say a crime has been charged against someone, that king has the final say on that matter. Think of an Israelite king as the president, and final judge on any significant matter. No he wasn't the head priest as God always separated the office of top priest from top civil leader in Israel. The point here is this building is the physical place where people came for their trials.
  - b) OK John, you make me feel like I'm taking a tour of Washington DC here. Why does the bible want us to know about Solomon's throne room? After all, we don't get these types of details of any other leader in their history. Again, the idea is that we are approaching a holy God and the room that we come to Him for decisions is something special.
  - c) Let me try this one more way. There will come a day when all people will be judged. For those who have trusted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, there is a judgment based on what we did with that knowledge. For everyone else, the bible speaks of a separate time where they will be judged based on how they have lived out their lives. (See Revelation Chapter 20 for references to these two judgments.)
    - i) Do I think that judgment room will look like this one? Possibly. I think when we are judged we are going to be so focused on God Himself we're not going to notice what the judgment room looks like. For those who do care, this is a description of that room so we grasp the idea that there is a judgment coming for all people and God will judge people from a specific throne room.
7. Verse 8: And the palace in which he was to live, set farther back, was similar in design. Solomon also made a palace like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had married.
  - a) Remember that most of the verses we read focused on where Solomon was going to work, and not where say he slept at night. The only reference to his personal residence was back in Verse 1. Here in Verse 8 we read that Solomon also built a separate residence for the woman he took as his wife, which was the Egyptian Pharaoh's daughter.
  - b) OK, if this was his wife, why did she have her own residence? One has to understand the practice of ancient kings. To put it simply, they lived alone and when they wanted to see their wives they would send for them to come to them. Later in this book we'll read that Solomon built up a harem of 1,000 women. I don't know if each had her own place but I doubt Solomon built a 1,000 separate residences. Meanwhile, back to construction:
8. Verse 9: All these structures, from the outside to the great courtyard and from foundation to eaves, were made of blocks of high-grade stone cut to size and trimmed with a saw on their inner and outer faces. <sup>10</sup> The foundations were laid with large stones of good quality, some measuring ten cubits and some eight. <sup>11</sup> Above were high-grade stones, cut to size, and cedar beams. <sup>12</sup> The great courtyard was surrounded by a wall of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams, as was the inner courtyard of the temple of the LORD with its portico.
  - a) One has to understand that it was not like Solomon built "this thing over here and that thing over there". While the text is not clear, I believe he built a big complex to live and work and all of the verses in this chapter so far are describing that complex.
  - b) Underneath this great complex was big stones cut to size and cedar beams placed on top of those stones. As most of you know by now I don't really care how it was built, but I do believe it is important to learn why it was built. So why does God want us to know that the foundation was made with "dressed" stones and cedar beams? If you learn to spend time just thinking about questions like that in the bible, not only have you come to right place, but I also believe that is what God wants us to think about as we study our bible. No not just construction details, but the biggest question of "why is that here in the bible?" If one gets in that habit, we do grow as Christians and become more mature as believers.

- c) Ok, with the big picture thoughts out of my system, onto the specifics about these verses. Why does God want us to know about these special stones? Think about it this way, can anyone see these stones? Once the ruling structure was built, can anyone see foundation stones that held this thing up? Hardly, unless one digs a tunnel to get access to them.
  - d) Think about those stones this way: Why should we care that they are costly? In fact why should we care what those stones are like at all? My answer is that it comes down to the idea of God as "holy". Everything we do for God should be special all the way down to the parts no one sees. I'm not thinking about the actual construction of places where we worship God as much as I am thinking of the things we do for God both individually and collectively. It is kind of like thinking, "No one will see this work that I am doing so why should I make it special?" The answer is that God cares. He cares about every aspect of our lives, even the parts that no one sees. My point here is that as one reads about the special stones no one sees for this temple, think about any or all works we do for God that in effect no one is aware of. God is aware and that is why such work should be special.
  - e) Meanwhile, back to construction details: Solomon had this complex constructed from the best stones and trees that were available in that greater area. Again, these materials came from non-Jewish locations that are symbolic of Gentiles worshipping a Jewish God. Since I've beaten that point to death in the last lesson, I'll stop stating it.
    - i) Verse 12 also mentions high walls were built around parts of this complex. That means the beauty of the complex can only be seen from the inside. OK why should I care about that fact? Consider all the things one knows about God once one has spent some time studying the bible. It is the reminder that one does not appreciate the beauty of God in effect until one steps inside His world to study about the type of relationship He desires for all of us as believers.
    - ii) With that stated, it is now time to mention who was in charge of all of this work.
9. Verse 13: King Solomon sent to Tyre and brought Hiram, <sup>14</sup> whose mother was a widow from the tribe of Naphtali and whose father was a man of Tyre and a craftsman in bronze. Hiram was highly skilled and experienced in all kinds of bronze work. He came to King Solomon and did all the work assigned to him.
- a) The first question to ask here is who is this Hiram character and why should we care? First of all, his name in the original language is spelled the same as the king of Tyre that we read about in the last chapter. A lot of English translations spell this man's name with different vowels to emphasize the fact they are different people with the same name.
  - b) With that said, this Hiram man was half-Jewish, from Naphtali, which was one of the 12 tribes of Israel. His father was non-Jewish and was from Tyre. So here is this man who is half-Jewish who had a gift to work with bronze. Apparently he already had a reputation for being good at that type of work and Solomon as the king sent for him.
  - c) So other than winning at a game of bible trivia pursuit, why should I care about this man?
    - i) The interesting thing is to compare this to when the original tabernacle was built under Moses' command centuries earlier. Exodus 31 mentions a fully Jewish man who had the skills to oversee the construction of many aspects of that tabernacle.
    - ii) Here we have someone who is "Half-Jewish and "Half-Gentile" who was brought in by Solomon in effect to oversee this construction. As I have been stating over this lesson and the last one, the future temple project is a model of life in heaven where in effect there are no "Jews or Gentiles", just saved people who believe in God and have trusted in His guidance for their lives. Now here we have this "half-breed" who is a mixture of both types of people being brought in by a Jewish King so that a Jewish temple to God can be built.
    - iii) If nothing else, think about the next time someone says to you, "You are not good enough to do this project. You are not a fully committed "whatever". Comments like that make us feel unworthy. Here this "half-breed" leads God's project.

10. Verse 15: He cast two bronze pillars, each eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits around, by line.  
<sup>16</sup> He also made two capitals of cast bronze to set on the tops of the pillars; each capital was five cubits high. <sup>17</sup> A network of interwoven chains festooned the capitals on top of the pillars, seven for each capital. <sup>18</sup> He made pomegranates in two rows encircling each network to decorate the capitals on top of the pillars. He did the same for each capital. <sup>19</sup> The capitals on top of the pillars in the portico were in the shape of lilies, four cubits high. <sup>20</sup> On the capitals of both pillars, above the bowl-shaped part next to the network, were the two hundred pomegranates in rows all around. <sup>21</sup> He erected the pillars at the portico of the temple. The pillar to the south he named Jakin and the one to the north Boaz. <sup>22</sup> The capitals on top were in the shape of lilies. And so the work on the pillars was completed.

- a) Now it's time to talk about what this man named Hiram actually built. The short version here is these verses are describing two large pillars. They didn't hold anything up, but are there as decorations for the front of the building where Solomon did his judging.
- b) The columns actually had two parts to them. The main part was about 27 feet high and on top of that were "lids" that were about 7-8 feet high. The columns were hollow, which is why the lids were built. The "big lids" of these pillars were decorated with carvings of pomegranates. That is a fruit that blooms in Israel. As I discussed in the last lesson, the idea is of something blooming in a desert country being symbolic of believers "blooming" for God based on the work we do.
- c) On the top of the pillars were "lilies". Think of it as looking up to the top of these towers and seeing beautiful flowers that were blooming. The idea is for those who are there to look up to the heavens and see the beauty of God. They are a simple symbol that these lilies were decorations to get people to look up to the top of those pillars.
- d) Here is the interesting part: Both of these pillars have names. One is named Jakin and the other is named Boaz. That is a transliteration of the original Hebrew.
  - i) Jakin means "God shall establish" and Boaz means "In God's strength".
  - ii) OK John, time for another so what? The idea is that between these two pillars is where the king of Israel is to make judgment decisions that effect the nation. The pillars remind the king and anyone thinking about the kings' judgment that we are to remember that it is by God's strength that He establishes that judgment.
  - iii) Just as those Israelite kings were to look for God's guidance for judgment, so God desires that we seek Him to guide our lives as well. The idea is as simple as daily time reading His word and time in prayer. Then one should just make the best decision one can make knowing that God is guiding and judging over our lives. Those pillars were there to remind whoever was the king who is really in charge. Our bible reminds us who it is that is really guiding our lives as well.
- e) Meanwhile, back to the literal aspects. These tall columns were built and didn't support anything. This is the last we read of Solomon's "buildings". The rest of the chapter will now focus on accessories for the temple. Remember that I titled this lesson what else did Solomon build? Part of that answer is items used in service to the temple. With that said, we will read of the first item beginning in Verse 23.
- f) Before I move on, let me talk for a moment about bronze itself. After all, if you recall from the last lesson, just about everything made for the temple was covered in gold. It was as if Solomon just happened to have a lot of gold lying around the place. Here in this chapter we will read of bronze as being the main building material Hiram used. So did Solomon run out of gold here? No. Let me explain the significance of bronze:
  - i) Bronze in the bible is associated with God's judgment. That is because as a metal, bronze can withstand a high heat and still be, well bronze. If one goes through the whole bible, one can see bronze being used whenever judgment is happening. My point is this building is being used to judge sins both by the animal sacrifices made to God as well as the king judging people. Bronze is symbolic of that judgment.

11. Verse 23: He made the Sea of cast metal, circular in shape, measuring ten cubits from rim to rim and five cubits high. It took a line of thirty cubits to measure around it. <sup>24</sup> Below the rim, gourds encircled it--ten to a cubit. The gourds were cast in two rows in one piece with the Sea.
- a) Remember that Hurum "half-Jewish" man? He is the "He" of these verses. The point is he built a giant round bowl to hold water. It was about 15 feet wide and 7.5 feet high. This big bowl was for the priests to wash and draw water from to use to wash the sacrifices that were made in the temple. Going back to the book of Exodus, priests were required to wash before their daily service and putting on their priestly garments and this was to be their water source. The size in cubits is five high and ten cubits deep.
    - i) Let me discuss "five and ten" for a moment. When we think of "five and ten" we usually think of the number of fingers and toes we have. In this case, the numbers show our humanity (that is, our imperfect human form) in order to be cleaned so that we can be of service to Him. The point is these dimensions remind us of our own humanity as we serve a perfect God.
  - b) The text mentions gourd decorations (carvings). A gourd is a locally grown fruit. The idea is again about "blossoming" for God by after being cleansed for service for Him.
  - c) I want to explain one more bit of interesting (to me) trivia and then I promise to move on. This verse says the distance from rim to rim was 10 cubits. This verse also says that it was 30 cubits around. Using geometry terms that means the radius of this circular bowl was 10 cubits and the circumference was 30 cubits. If you remember your geometry, the ratio between the radius and the circumference should equal "pi". Yet, here the circumference of the bowl is only three times the radius. So, is the bible in error or is it just rounding?
    - i) In the original Hebrew language, every letter is also a number. It would be like saying "A equals 1, and B equals 2". If one takes the total numerical value of the Hebrew word translated circumference and divide that number by the numerical value of word that could be translated "measuring" (the radius), the ratio is pi to a pretty accurate degree. Do you have to know this to be a good Christian? No, it is just an interesting piece of trivia. OK, back to the construction project:
12. Verse 25: The Sea stood on twelve bulls, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south and three facing east. The Sea rested on top of them, and their hindquarters were toward the center. <sup>26</sup> It was a handbreadth in thickness, and its rim was like the rim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It held two thousand baths.
- a) Remember that "The Sea" is this large ten cubit wide bowl used for priests to wash. I am speculating this thing had a lid too, but that is not described here. These verses are saying that the bowl rested on twelve carvings of bulls.
    - i) OK why should I care that this big water bowl rested on twelve bull statues? To understand we need to learn a little bit about bulls. The word "bull" is actually a large ox. Of all the animals that can be domesticated for our service by humans, ox bulls are the largest. That is why throughout the bible, the ox has always been a symbol of service. So here are these 12 statues of ox's facing in all directions. It is a symbol of our service to God once we have been cleaned for use for him.
    - ii) Next, let me explain the number twelve. That number has always been associated with service to God in the bible. Remember that Israel was divided into 12 tribes. Here is this big bathing bowl designed to be used by the priests so that they could be of use to God's people, the twelve tribes of Israel.
  - b) So does this mean we should bathe before we go to church? Hopefully yes, but that is not the issue here. The point is God wants us to turn from sin and regularly confess whatever sins we have become aware of so that we can be forgiven and then we can be of service to Him. Then we, like that ox-servant go out in the world and make a difference for Him.
  - c) To sum all this up, this big bowl and its decorations are symbolic of how we get cleansed so we can go out in the world and make a difference for God.

13. Verse 27: He also made ten movable stands of bronze; each was four cubits long, four wide and three high.<sup>28</sup> This is how the stands were made: They had side panels attached to uprights.<sup>29</sup> On the panels between the uprights were lions, bulls and cherubim--and on the uprights as well. Above and below the lions and bulls were wreaths of hammered work.<sup>30</sup> Each stand had four bronze wheels with bronze axles, and each had a basin resting on four supports, cast with wreaths on each side.<sup>31</sup> On the inside of the stand there was an opening that had a circular frame one cubit deep. This opening was round, and with its basework it measured a cubit and a half. Around its opening there was engraving. The panels of the stands were square, not round.<sup>32</sup> The four wheels were under the panels, and the axles of the wheels were attached to the stand. The diameter of each wheel was a cubit and a half.<sup>33</sup> The wheels were made like chariot wheels; the axles, rims, spokes and hubs were all of cast metal.
- a) As I read all of these construction details, I kept asking myself, am I going to remember any of these details two minutes from now? My answer is no, and I suspect that neither will anyone else reading this. Again, my goal is not to make us experts on all the details on the things that Solomon built. My goal is to teach us how they are symbolic of our relationship with God. Therefore, if you can keep in mind that this temple and all of the supporting articles are symbolic of our relationship with God, they now become more interesting to study and think about. That is what I want to do here.
  - b) With that said, Solomon built ten movable carts. If one can picture gurneys that are used in hospitals to transport sick people and other items that is a little like what we see here.
  - c) Again, first remember that everything here is made of bronze, which again is associated with judgment. Therefore, think of these gurneys as being of service so that sin can be judged on the sacrificial altar.
  - d) The size of these carts in feet is about six feet long by six feet wide by five feet high. That means they are a little bigger than a hospital gurney, but still small enough that it would be fairly easy to push around. These carts had bronze wheels and axels (Verse 30) that again means they were fairly easy to push around.
  - e) These carts were decorated with lions, bulls and cherubim. I could have a field day going through these, but I'll make it brief. Lions are the strongest of animals. It reminds us of our reliance upon God's strength to do His service in the world. Bulls, as I said earlier are the largest animals that can be domesticated. That too, speaks of our service to Him. Then we have cherubim. Modern art tends to picture cherubim as cute baby angels. That is not the correct biblical concept. Cherubim are powerful angels that protected God's throne.
    - i) Think of them as fierce guardians of God's presence. Returning back to our image of lions and ox's, the idea of cherubim is to remind us never to take our service for God lightly and to remember who He is when we are in service for Him.
  - f) For those of you who hate all of these construction details hang in there. I'm trying to get through the rest of this as quickly as I can and then come back to the more important issue of why any and all of this is significant. Meanwhile, time for more construction details:
14. Verse 34: Each stand had four handles, one on each corner, projecting from the stand.<sup>35</sup> At the top of the stand there was a circular band half a cubit deep. The supports and panels were attached to the top of the stand.<sup>36</sup> He engraved cherubim, lions and palm trees on the surfaces of the supports and on the panels, in every available space, with wreaths all around.<sup>37</sup> This is the way he made the ten stands. They were all cast in the same molds and were identical in size and shape.
- a) The short version here is these ten portable carts are identical. They were used as portable washing bowls. In other words the big "Sea" that held the water was the main source of the water. These 10 carts were then moved around the temple area to help the priests do the washing of the animals that were sacrificed. What is interesting is that the text only implies what these carts were used for. They mainly focused on what they looked like. Since the focus is on what it looks like, let me stick to that topic for one more moment.

- b) OK, what is this "circular band" thing? Think of it as a round bowl within the cart that held the water for washing. The decorations on these things included lions, cherubim and palm trees. Since I already talked about the first two items, let me remind all of us of the palm tree reference one more time: They bloom in the desert. Again the idea is being of service in a desert location like Israel. It reminds us to "bloom" in our service for God.
15. Verse 38: He then made ten bronze basins, each holding forty baths and measuring four cubits across, one basin to go on each of the ten stands. <sup>39</sup> He placed five of the stands on the south side of the temple and five on the north. He placed the Sea on the south side, at the southeast corner of the temple. <sup>40</sup> He also made the basins and shovels and sprinkling bowls.
- a) Bottom line here is a bunch of "big buckets" to transport water from the big container that was described earlier in the chapter to the 10 "gurneys". The tem translated "forty baths" is a liquid measure, kind of like saying gallons. To keep it simple, think of this in terms of big buckets of water that rested inside the gurneys.
- b) The final thing mentioned is some miscellaneous tools such as basins (think small devices to carry water) shovels (to bury the parts of the sacrifices that were used) and bowls used to sprinkle things. If you know something about their sacrifices made to God, they were not all animals. They were mixed with other food offerings. The bottom line is these tools were used for the service needed in this temple.
- c) OK John, all of this would be interesting if my job was to work in this temple. Since it is not, tell me again and quickly, why I should care about all of this stuff? Again it is not to memorize construction details, but just to remind ourselves that we are to be service to the God we serve. While we don't need big water containers to wash animal sacrifices, we can read of these items used in the temple and remember that God calls each of us into service for Him to make a difference for Him in this world. He wants us to give it our all and use the best of our time and best of our materials to make that difference for Him. If one gets nothing else out of this chapter, think about being of service to "our king" and how that is being modeled for us in this chapter.
16. Verse 40 continued: So Hiram finished all the work he had undertaken for King Solomon in the temple of the LORD: <sup>41</sup> the two pillars; the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars; the two sets of network decorating the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars; <sup>42</sup> the four hundred pomegranates for the two sets of network (two rows of pomegranates for each network, decorating the bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars); <sup>43</sup> the ten stands with their ten basins; <sup>44</sup> the Sea and the twelve bulls under it; <sup>45</sup> the pots, shovels and sprinkling bowls.
- a) Think of these verses as the epilogue. To say this in simple English, everything that this guy Hiram set out to do, got done. All of the items that Solomon ordered him to build got built exactly as it was described in this chapter.
- b) The only new bit of information here is the number of pomegranate sculptures that were carved in the columns. OK, while I'm on that topic, why this fruit and why so many? It's a little like the palm tree itself. The idea is that this fruit grows in a desert country. Again the idea is to remind us that we can blossom for God by letting Him guide us so that we can make a difference for Him in this world.
17. Verse 45 continued: All these objects that Hiram made for King Solomon for the temple of the LORD were of burnished bronze. <sup>46</sup> The king had them cast in clay molds in the plain of the Jordan between Succoth and Zarethan. <sup>47</sup> Solomon left all these things unweighed, because there were so many; the weight of the bronze was not determined.
- a) More epilogue comments. The short version here is the bronze things that were molded were done offsite. They were cast in Israel and then when they were finished they were brought up to Jerusalem and placed in the temple structure. So why does God want us to know how and where these things were made? I suppose it is to give credit for the work that was done. As one goes through one's bible, one notices it goes out of its way to credit those who are working to do God's will at any given time.

- b) I'm speculating here, but I suspect that the reason the "where" was stated is to show that not all the work was done in Lebanon (see last chapter). This part of the construction was done in Israel. Anyway, it is just a footnote in effect to congratulate those who did work to make a difference for God in their lives.
  - c) Finally we get this unusual comment that the weight of all the bronze was not measured, in effect because there was so much of it. This is another reminder about how rich Israel was at the time of Solomon's rule. Think about all the gold and bronze that was used in order to make this temple. Yes a lot of it came from David conquering his enemies. The point is it was there, and people used their resources to honor God with it.
    - i) How God responds to this temple is coming up in Chapter 9.
    - ii) Meanwhile we still have four more verses to in this chapter. Speaking of which:
18. Verse 48: Solomon also made all the furnishings that were in the LORD's temple: the golden altar; the golden table on which was the bread of the Presence; <sup>49</sup> the lampstands of pure gold (five on the right and five on the left, in front of the inner sanctuary); the gold floral work and lamps and tongs; <sup>50</sup> the pure gold basins, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and censers; and the gold sockets for the doors of the innermost room, the Most Holy Place, and also for the doors of the main hall of the temple. <sup>51</sup> When all the work King Solomon had done for the temple of the LORD was finished, he brought in the things his father David had dedicated--the silver and gold and the furnishings--and he placed them in the treasuries of the LORD's temple.
- a) The key to understanding these last few verses is to know a little about the history of the original tabernacle that was built. What I mean by that is all the things described in the last two chapters about building the tabernacle structure left out some of the items used in the worship of God that are mentioned back in Exodus in the construction of the original tabernacle. Like the last chapter, the word gold is used over and over again to show the amount of gold that existed in the construction of the palace.
  - b) There are also a few differences noted here between the original tabernacle built under Moses' supervision and the temple built by Solomon. In the tabernacle, there was only one lamp stand. Here Solomon built ten. So why not 12 lamp stands for the 12 tribes? Don't know. Maybe it is to just show our humanity before God as "10" is symbolic of our humanity (as in 10 fingers and ten toes). Truthfully I don't know why Solomon built 10 lamp stands. I'm just pointing out the difference between this and the original tabernacle.
  - c) With that said, notice the last verse. We have a reference to Solomon's father David and all the things that he had dedicated for the construction of this temple. To remind all of us of a little history, David wanted to build this thing, but God got the message to David that he couldn't build it, because David conquered a lot of territory by warfare. The key point of that message to David is that God didn't want other nations to think that the only reason this temple could be built is due to victories over other nations. That is all based on 2nd Samuel Chapter 7. Therefore, David still did what God didn't say he couldn't do, which was to plan for this temple. I suspect David organized a lot of the construction of some of the items of this temple. This isn't in the text, but I suspect that it was David who drew up the plans for this thing and then said to Solomon in effect, "go build this".
19. Before I say anything else, if you can survive through all of this construction detail, you can make through the rest of 1st and 2nd Kings. I admit a lot of this text was tough sledding to use an old cliché. My goal was not to make you an expert on all the construction details of the temple, but to get us to understand why the temple was built the way it was. To put it simply, these details are designed to get the Israelites to focus upon God, and not for God to actually dwell within this building. If one gets that, one gets the central point of this lesson.
- a) I want to end this lesson by coming back to the "why" question some more. I'm convinced the most important question in studying one's bible is to constantly ask, "why is this text saying what it is saying?" Therefore, let me end this lesson by discussing about why this "permanent" temple is part of the bible and what it is that God wants us to learn from it.

- b) Let me start with the "off site" issue. If you recall from a few verses back, all of the bronze construction was done off site. In the last chapter, we learn that all of the gold, stone and woodwork were also organized and built off site. Why is that important for us to know?
    - i) Think of it as God working on our lives, both individually and as a church. If you really study either the lives of any Christian or the church as a whole, you mainly will see a mess of a project. My point is we are imperfect people and we all make mistakes that we regret. However, think of as Christians as God's building project. He is working on each of our lives and the "construction" of the church. We aren't going to see the beauty of it, until it is done and in effect we're done with our lives.
    - ii) In other words, we won't appreciate the beauty of what God is working on in our lives and the lives of the church until we get to heaven and see the "finished work" of the church. That is why there is such a big emphasis on "off site work".
  - c) Next consider this "compound" of a structure as a whole. Solomon spent far more time on his own house (Verse 1) than he did building the temple itself (last verse of Chapter 6). We also read of the house of the "forest of Lebanon", which we will read later in the book became an armory to store weapons. So besides the temple itself and the building where the king is to judge, we have a description of buildings that can get one's focus off of God.
  - d) Now think about our own lives and how we mix our own desires with what Gods desires of us. Consider the word picture that the structures around the temple as distractions that keep us from focusing upon God Himself with our lives. For example, we can hold on to things we feel guilty about that we have done wrong in our lives. We "store" them inside of us, but we don't lay them at His feet and say in effect, "This is now your problem."
    - i) My point is one can see the whole temple complex as a model of how we approach God. Then we had the "hallway" where one lays their burdens before God as we approach Him. All of the outlying buildings can represent our own lives with our own faults and the things that we should turn over to God.
    - ii) Is that picture necessarily tied to this temple? Believe it or not, there are studies done by Christians and Jewish scholars who do draw analogies between this entire temple structure and our relationship to God. Whether or not God intended for us to think about the temple that way is just an interesting possibility.
  - e) In a sense, I'm ending this lesson with my opening question, "why should we care about what else Solomon built?" One answer is it represents how we are to be of service to Him in our lives. The other possible answer is it can represent how we are to approach Him as His servants and lay our burdens down before Him. Again, remember we as disciples of Christ should not think of ourselves as members of any political party, but only desire to live under the rule of our king. That concept is laid out for us in these temple details: To remind us that we serve our king and God wants us to use our lives to make a difference for Him with our lives. With that said, let me end in prayer.
20. Father, help us to remember that the purpose of our lives is to make a difference for You. Help us to remember that You are in charge of every aspect of our lives. Help us to know what it is that You desire that we do with our lives. In effect, make us part of Your building project. Help us to remember that all that we do is being watched by You and we should use our time in order to make a difference for You. Help us to rely upon Your power to make that difference and not try to satisfy Your desire for us based on our own efforts without Your guidance. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.