



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

1 KINGS 1-11 &
1 CHRONICLES

Week 2

The dimensions of Solomon's Temple compared with a standard high school basketball court.

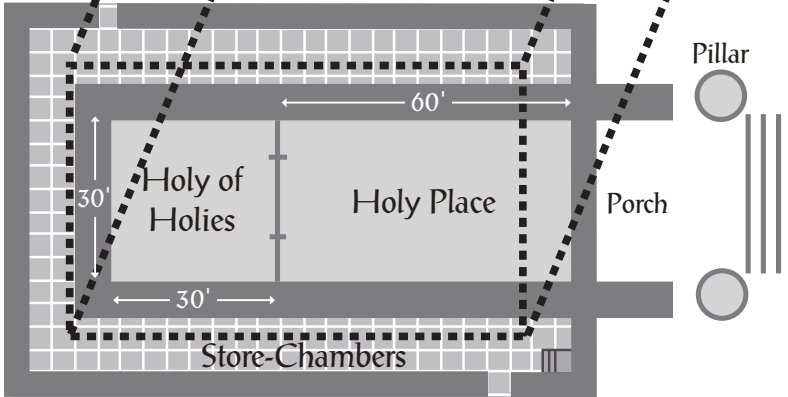
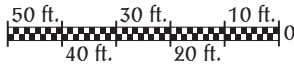
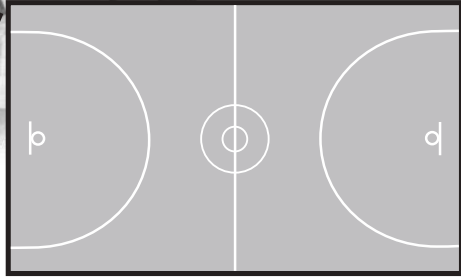
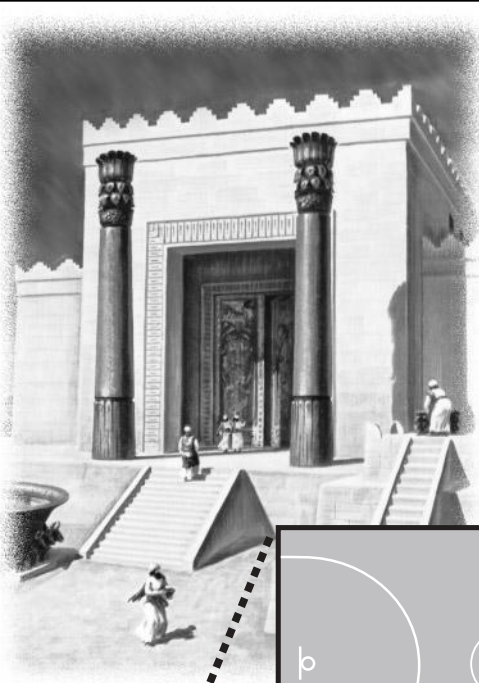


Diagram by Marv Wegner. Temple illustration courtesy Golden Press

The Seven-Year Wonder

DAY 8

1 Kings 6:1-38

Does religious imagery and architecture help you worship God, or does it do exactly the opposite?

1. What were the key dimensions and divisions of the Temple (vs. 2-10)? Taking one of the standard measures of the cubit as 18 inches, the main area (Holy Place) and inner sanctuary (Most Holy Place) were 90 feet long by 30 feet wide by 45 feet high.

2. “I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel” (vs. 11-13). The note of grace, favor and protection is struck as this magnificent building nears completion. The Temple will be the national focus of the worship of Israel’s God for almost 380 years.

3. The building was not huge by modern standards, but what features added to its luster and magnificence (vs. 14-37)?

1. How does Paul interpret the Christ-centered symbolism of the Temple of God (1Co 3:16-17)? How does that make you feel?

2. Do you believe that beautiful and ornate buildings distract people from the pure worship of God? Does Israel’s history support this idea? Is it religious features that make a church building different from other structures, or the people?

*The **480 years** (v. 1) marks the approximate mid-point of Israel’s history—from the Exodus under Moses to the Temple of Solomon to the Exile in Babylon. The sculptures of **cherubim** (vs. 23-38) were intended to help the Israelites remember the key events in their history from the Garden of Eden to the Tabernacle of Moses to the time of Solomon’s Temple. The cherubim were viewed by many biblical writers as signifying the special presence of God.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

DAY 9

Greed and Glory

1 Kings 7:1-51

OPENING
up to the Word

Do you have the ability to perceive when someone is slipping spiritually?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. “It took Solomon thirteen years, to complete the construction of his palace” (v. 1). If you had been Solomon, building your own house and a house for God, do you feel you would have always given God’s house priority?

2. What five structures did Solomon build for himself and his court (vs. 2-8)?

3. What two materials formed the basis of much of Solomon’s building projects (vs. 9-12)?

4. What were the names of the two great pillars used to guard the entrance to the temple (vs. 13-22)? Why did they have names? What metal was used for the additional items of temple furniture—the Sea (or Laver), the ten movable stands and the basins (vs. 23-40)? The metal Sea could hold about 11,500 gallons of water.

5. What metal was used for the implements used in the inner temple (vs. 40-51)?

LIVING
out the Word

Does there seem to be a subtle warning undercutting these colossal achievements? How would you describe it?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The purpose of the two huge pillars **Jakin and Boaz** is not clear. The names, roughly translated, could mean “Yahweh will establish [jakin] thy throne for ever” and “In the strength [boaz] of Yahweh shall the king rejoice.” These pillars may thus commemorate God’s promises to the Davidic dynasty. The **twelve bulls** surrounding the bronze **Sea** may symbolize God’s power demonstrated at Creation to restrain the sea, a symbol of chaos to the Hebrews (Job 38:8-11).*



“King Solomon sent to Tyre and brought Hiram, 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.”

1 Kings 7:13-14

“Then King Solomon summoned into his presence at Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the Lord’s covenant from Zion, the city of David.”

1 Kings 8:1



Hark! Hark! The Ark!

DAY 10

1 Kings 8:1-21

Does your school, workplace or community have a central unifying symbol, flag or banner?

1. The purpose of the Temple was to house “the ark of the Lord’s covenant.” What name now begins to be attached to the city of David or Jerusalem (vs. 1)?

2. The Ark signified the presence of God’s glory with his people. It had a long and rich history. What was inside the Ark that made it so important (vs. 2-9)?

3. What dramatic manifestation occurred as the ark was placed in the Temple (vs. 10-11)? Are there echoes here of the days of Moses and the giving of the law (Ex 40:34-35)? Does this demonstrate God’s approval of the ceremony?

4. “I have built the temple for the Name of the Lord” (vs. 12-21). Solomon’s mission was accomplished. This was his greatest day. He blessed the people and repeated the kingly promises to David.

1. Solomon had reached a pinnacle of achievement, but in hindsight we are reminded of the admonition of 1 Corinthians 10:11-12.

2. Solomon’s prayer is another reminder of the importance of praising God in our own personal prayer. Why not give thanks to God in prayer for his abundant blessings right now?

*One biblical question that continually attracts attention is the **fate of the Ark of the Covenant**. Movies and novels and semi-reliable documentaries have attempted to locate the Ark. Yet this is the last reference to the Ark except for recollection statements in the works of the Prophets. The Ark was probably destroyed or plundered in the days of the Babylonian destruction in 586 B.C. As the prophet Jeremiah tried to remind the people at the time, God is not overly attached to physical icons—he cares more for true worship and obedience (Jer 7:1-15).*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

A Prayer for All Seasons

1 Kings 8:22-66

OPENING
up to the Word

What is the most memorable experience you can recall in prayer? Was it public or private?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Did Solomon pray this prayer just for himself? What other factors were on his mind (vs. 22-30)?

2. *Seven* was an important symbolic number of perfection and completion in ancient Israel. Note the seven divisions or specific cases around which Solomon organized his prayer in verses 31, 33, 35, 37, 41, 44 and 46. Are there any phrases or words that repeat?

3. Was *repentance* seen as a key factor for God answering this prayer (vs. 47-53)?

4. Note the simple power and force of Solomon's benediction (vs. 54- 61) and the reminder of Israel's national purpose in verse 60.

LIVING
out the Word

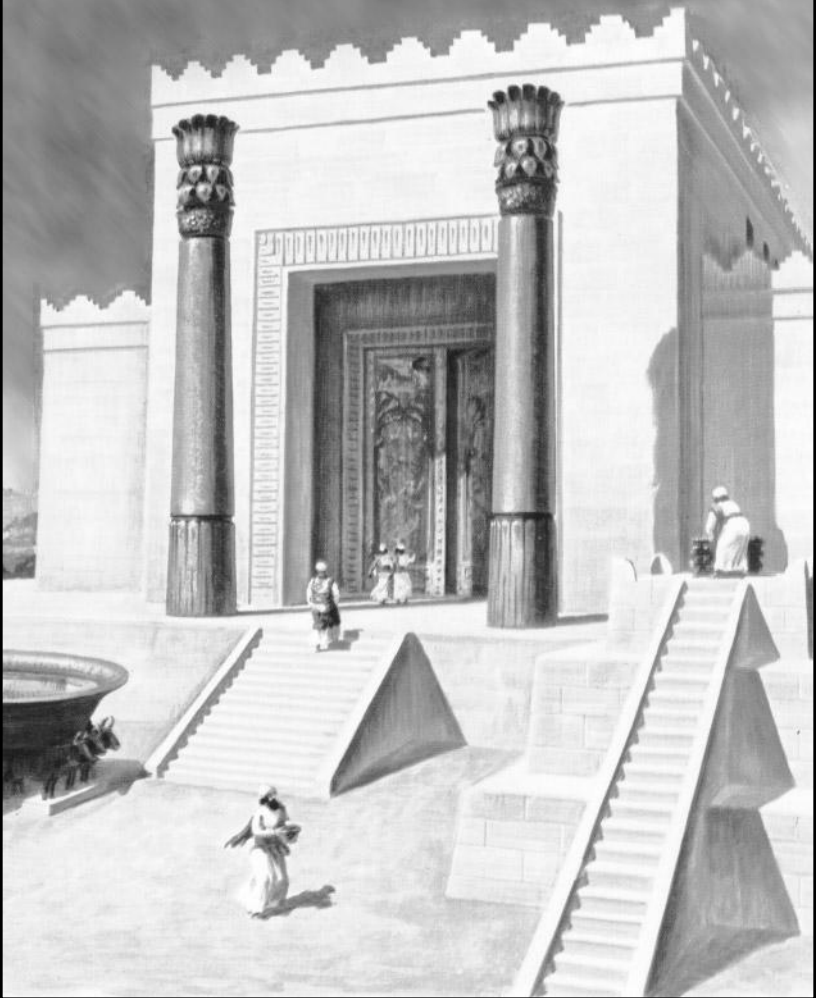
Even at Israel's peak there is a note of warning and sobriety—the reference to national captivity (vs. 47-50), which will become a reality at the conclusion of the books of 2 Kings. During your personal peaks of success or prosperity, have you paused to consider the possible consequences of your decisions?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The text here uses three different words for **prayer**, underscoring its importance. They are tephilla—simple intercession and praise (v. 29); tehinna—an earnest prayer for help (v. 45); and rinna—a ringing cry of petition (v. 52). The phrase **Lebo-Hamath** in verse 65 is another reference to the extent of Solomon's dominion. It refers to Hamath, a city on the Orontes River along the trade route from Syria to Asia Minor. In Numbers 34:7 it is listed as the ideal northern boundary of Israel, thus underscoring the accomplishments of Solomon.*

“Solomon offered a sacrifice of fellowship offerings to the Lord: twenty-two thousand cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats. So the king and all the Israelites dedicated the temple of the Lord.”

1 Kings 8:63



DAY 12

“I’d Like a Word With You”

1 Kings 9:1-9

OPENING
up to the Word

Has your boss or supervisor or teacher ever called you aside for an important chat? How did it go?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Was God pleased with Solomon’s dedication ceremonies (vs. 1-3)?
2. But, did he make it clear that the promises to the dynasty had conditions (vs. 1-7)?
3. What were the penalties of disobedience (vs. 8-9)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Do you believe that God occasionally allows gentle warnings to come our way when things are going well for us? Has this ever happened to you?
2. What advice would you have offered Solomon at this stage of his life?
3. “A byword and an object of ridicule” (9:7). Have you had the experience of seeing seemingly sincere and well-intentioned projects or endeavors come to nothing?

WINDOW
on the Word

*It is good to keep clear the distinctions between this Temple, usually called **Solomon’s Temple** or the First Temple, and the others mentioned in Scripture. The first—Solomon’s Temple—stood from the 900s B.C. until the destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. Nothing of Solomon’s structure remains above ground. It is thought that the Moslem **Dome of the Rock** in present-day Jerusalem may have been the site of either the innermost sanctuary or the altar of burnt offering just outside. At the return of the Jews from captivity, the **Second Temple** (Ezr 3-6) was built—a smaller, inferior version of the first. It stood for 500 years, though attacked by both the Syrians and the Roman general Pompey. It formed the nucleus of **Herod’s Temple**. Beginning in 19 B.C., Herod greatly extended the Second Temple. All this lavish effort went for naught when the Romans burned the structure in A.D. 70. The Temple itself is completely gone, but some of the platform foundations are seen in the Western or **Wailing Wall** in the Old City of Jerusalem. Recent excavations have uncovered stones, steps and other artifacts from that period.*

Cracks in the Empire

DAY 13

1 Kings 9:10-28

How do you feel about politics and social issues? Is this study motivating you to pay more attention to either of these?

OPENING
up to the Word

1. Is there any evidence in this passage that Solomon is beginning to run low on resources (vs. 10-14)? Are there indications that the prosperity was not as wide-spread as it could have been, especially outside Jerusalem?

DIGGING
into the Word

2. *Cabul* means “good-for-nothing.” Who coined the phrase (vs. 12-14)?

3. Note the terms “forced labor” and “slave labor” (vs. 15-23). Who was in charge of the forced labor (4:6)? What was his eventual fate (1Ki 12:18)? What does this tell you about the attitude of the work force?

4. Note Solomon’s attention to the City of David (1Ki 9:24). Verse 15 indicates Solomon extended the fortifications of Jerusalem. This helped contribute to the city’s strategic importance.

1. Was Solomon really offering God his best or was he serving himself more and more? List evidence both ways.

LIVING
out the Word

2. What one deep spiritual lesson is sinking in as this study of Solomon continues?

*The list of Solomon’s **defensive projects** in verses 15-19 runs from north to south (outside Jerusalem). **Hazor** is now one of the most noteworthy excavations in Palestine. A city gate and casemate wall from the time of Solomon has been found.*

***Gezer** guarded the important southwest approaches to Israel from Egypt and Philistia. **Lower Beth Horon** is about 11 miles northwest of Jerusalem and controlled the access to the valley of Ajjalon, one of the main ancient routes from Jerusalem to the Mediterranean Sea.*

WINDOW
on the Word

A Fool and His Money

1 Kings 10:1-11:13

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever had the experience of having your friends seek you out when you're "rolling in dough"?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. The Queen of Sheba was probably from Sabea in southwest Arabia, modern Yemen (10:1-13). Solomon's control of the caravan routes may have prompted her visit.
2. Did she discern the real source of Solomon's wealth (10:9)?
3. The money kept rolling in—666 talents, about 12.6 tons of gold per year (10:14-15). Was Solomon indulging in expensive luxuries (10:22)?
4. What weakness soon wore down Solomon's heart for God (11:1-7)? The builder of the Temple also built pagan places of worship that he was ordered as king to condemn (11:7-8). Was there a grace note in the judgment God pronounced (11:9-13)?

LIVING
out the Word

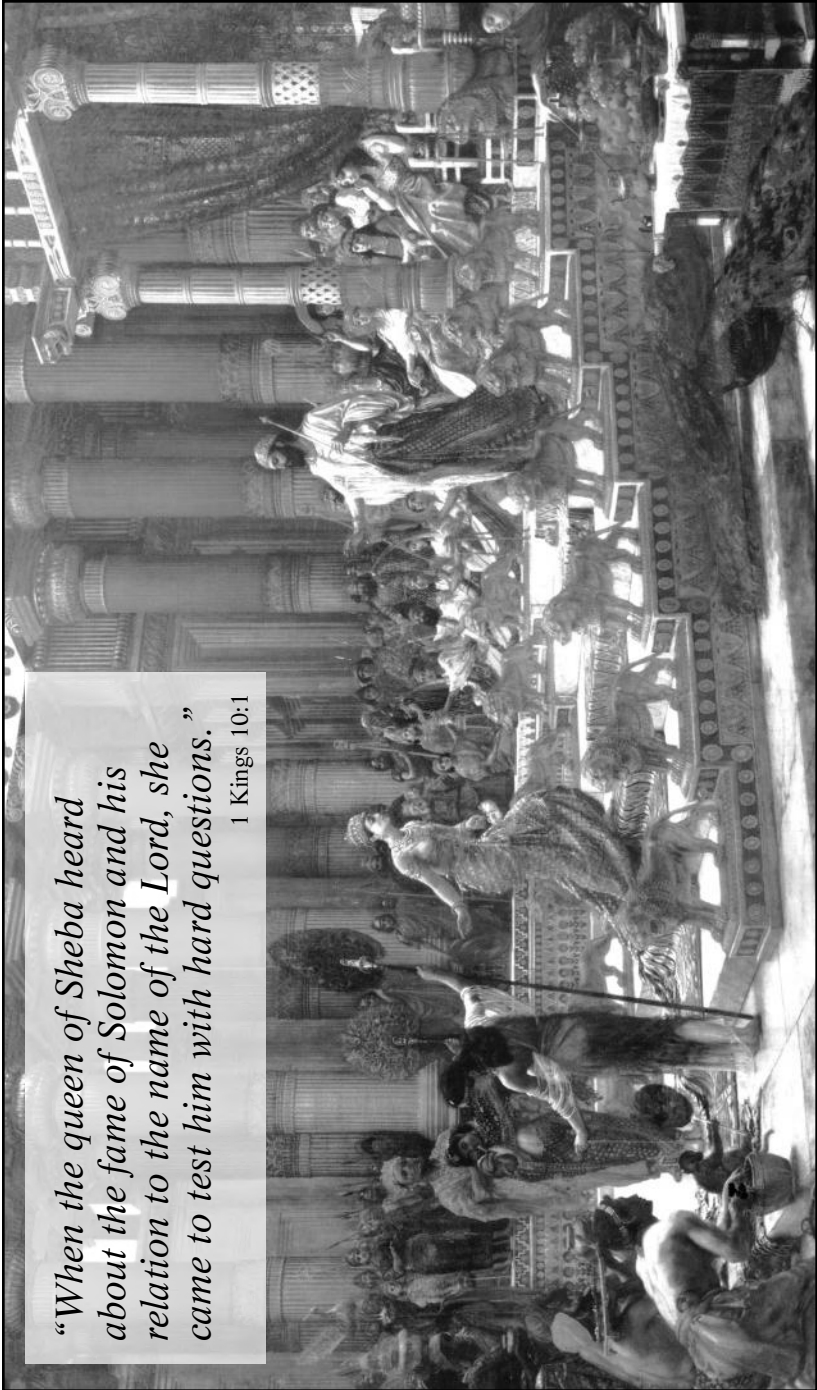
1. Was Solomon's life a tragedy? A melodrama? A soap opera? What would you title it if you were hired to write a movie script on his life?
2. The ancient Greeks said that the fall of a great man should engender tragic pity and fear in those who see it or hear of it. Do you agree?
3. Polygamy existed in ancient Israel, although kings were not to have "many wives" (Dt 17:17). Nevertheless, David had multiple wives and concubines, as did Jeroboam. How would you explain the polygamy of biblical figures to a skeptic or atheist?

WINDOW
on the Word

***Ezion-Geber**, naval base for Solomon's fleet (9:26), was once thought to be the archaeological site of **Tell el-Khelefeh** at the north end of the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea, near modern-day **Eilat**. An earlier generation of historians claimed that the remains of smelters, furnaces, crucibles and refineries in the region dated to the time of Solomon. Though this theory is questioned today, there is no doubt that the site of Tell el-Khelefeh was a fortress and administrative center on the Red Sea from very early times, including the time of Solomon.*

“When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions.”

1 Kings 10:1



Artwork by Sir Edward John Poynter