

Solomon recognized the mandate that had been placed on him by his father David and by the LORD, so he wasted little time in making arrangements for the materials needed for building the temple of the LORD. The wisdom that the LORD had given Solomon helped him make a deal with the king of Tyre for materials and to assemble a workforce capable of performing the work required.

1 Kings 5

2 And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying,

Tyre was a celebrated commercial city of Phoenicia, located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Israel and the Sea of Galilee. Tyre's king, Hiram, had been a good friend of David and he sent ambassadors to Solomon upon news of David's death, both to express his condolences for the loss of Solomon's father as well as to congratulate Solomon on becoming king (v. 1). Recognizing that Hiram's friendship now extended to him as well, Solomon responds by sending a request to Hiram for timber of cedar for building the temple, a project that he was responsible for completing.

3 Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

Hiram was obviously aware of David's desire to build a temple for the LORD and that the LORD had prohibited David from doing so. The reason that Solomon gives for this prohibition implied that construction of the temple could not begin until Israel had peace from its enemies. While this was true, it did not seem to be the only reason for David had explained to Solomon that the reason was because of the amount of blood that David had shed in wartime (1 Chr. 22:8 "*But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight*"). The LORD apparently did not want His house associated with bloodshed.

4 But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.

"But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side" – Even though his father David had fought the wars that subdued the enemies of Israel, Solomon recognized that it was the LORD Who had provided this period of peace that Israel was enjoying. **"so that there is neither adversary nor evil [trouble; problems; misfortune] occurrent"** – As a result of the peace provided by the LORD, there were no adversaries threatening Israel's safety, nor was there any "evil occurrent" (an occurrence of problems or misfortune) to distract Solomon from more constructive pursuits. Instead of fighting in wars as his father David had, Solomon was now free to concentrate his efforts on building the temple.

5 And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name.

Solomon informs Hiram of his intention to carry out the responsibility that had been placed on him by the LORD. The LORD had stated that instead of David building the temple, it would be built by the son that would be king after David (2 Sam. 7:12-13). As king, Solomon could have chosen to ignore the assignment that his father had given, but his love for the LORD (1 Kings 3:3) gave him the desire to complete this task.

6 Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that *there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.*

"Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon" – Years earlier Hiram had provided cedar trees and workers for building David's palace (2 Sam. 5:11), and so now Solomon asks that Hiram again provide cedar and workers for building the temple of God (2 Chr. 2:3 "*And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, even so deal with me*"). Lebanon was a mountain range in Phoenicia known for being a high-quality source of cedar.

"and my servants shall be with thy servants" – Solomon was not asking for charity but was promising that he would supplement Hiram's workers with men from Israel in order to lessen the burden of Solomon's request.

"and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint" – Solomon also promises compensation for Hiram's workers.

"for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians" – Sidon was another coastal city in Phoenicia. Solomon was stating that no one in Israel had the skill and experience at felling trees, cutting them into lumber and transporting them undamaged like Hiram's countrymen. Solomon wanted only the best for the temple.

Verses 7-9: Solomon's request pleased Hiram, who rejoiced and praise the LORD for the fact that David had such a wise son that had inherited the throne from him. In his reply to Solomon, Hiram agreed to do everything that Solomon had asked for, stating the means that would be used to transport the timber to wherever Solomon needed it and the payment that Solomon should give him in return.

10 So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire.

Cedar was considered to be the best timber for building because it was a durable wood, resistant to insects and rot. Commentators believe that the "fir trees" refer to the cypress tree, which was often used in making musical instruments, doors, ceilings and decks of ships. Hiram supplied Solomon with all the cedar and fir trees that he wanted during the construction of the temple.

Verses 11-18: These verses list the amount of wheat and oil that Solomon sent to Hiram each year in payment for the timber that he was receiving. Solomon demonstrated the wisdom that God had given him through the peace treaty he made with Hiram, as well as the workforce of 30,000 men he put together on a 3 month rotation to send to Lebanon to work with Hiram's men. The combined workforce of Hiram's and Solomon's men prepared the stones and timber needed for the construction of the temple.

1 Kings 6:1-10: These verses give an overview of the construction of the temple, listing the major portions of the building and their dimensions. We are also told that construction began 480 years after Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt, which also coincided with Solomon's fourth year as king. Another noteworthy fact is that all of the stones that were used to build the temple were finished offsite, so that nothing needed to be done to them at the construction site except to set them in place. That fact indicates the amount of planning that was done.

1 Kings 6

11 And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying, 12 *Concerning* this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father:

“And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying” – Notice that this verse does not say that the LORD came to or appeared to Solomon like He did previously in 2 Chr. 1:7 when He told Solomon to name the gift that he wanted. The phrase “the word of the LORD” was typically used to describe when the LORD spoke through a prophet, which was likely the case here.

“Concerning this house which thou art in building” – The LORD had promised David that his son Solomon would build the temple. The following statements are in the context of what the LORD had promised that He would do for David's descendants.

“if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them” – The aspects of the LORD's promises that are ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ are unconditional. However, how they were applied to the human descendants of David were conditional upon their obedience.

“then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father” – The spirit of the LORD's promise to David will indeed be fulfilled in Jesus Christ, Who will reign forever on the throne of David. However, the disobedience of David's descendants eventually led to them being ousted from the throne as Judah was led away captive to Babylon. None of David's human descendants have since sat on the throne but Christ will assume the throne when He returns and sets up His millennial kingdom on earth.

13 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

The LORD promised the dwell with His people in the temple and bless them as long as they obeyed Him. However, their disobedience eventually led to the LORD forsaking them and allowing them to be conquered by Babylon. The LORD repeated this conditional promise after the temple was completed and dedicated:

1 Kings 9:4-8 *“And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house?”*

14 So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

This statement summarizes the remainder of the chapter, which adds more details on the construction of the temple in addition to the details given in vs. 1-10. The house itself was constructed of cedar and fir and then overlaid with gold. The interior featured many ornate carvings of such things as cherubim, palm trees, and flowers, which were also overlaid with gold. The exterior courts were built of hewn stones and cedar beams. The construction of the temple spanned seven years, being completed in the 11th year of Solomon's reign.