



Building the Temple

Colour me!



1 Kings 5:1-12

After the death of his father David, Solomon became king of Israel. He was young and inexperienced, that's why he asked God for help to lead his people in the right path.

King Hiram of Tyre had always been friends with Solomon's father David. When Hiram learnt that Solomon was king, he sent some of his officials to meet with Solomon. Solomon sent a message back to Hiram: Remember how my father David wanted to build a temple where the Lord his God could be worshipped? But enemies kept attacking my father's kingdom, and he never had the chance. Now, thanks to the Lord God, there is peace in my kingdom and no trouble or threat of war anywhere. The Lord God promised my father that when his son became king, he would build a temple for worshipping the Lord. So I've decided to do that.

I'd like you to send your workers to cut down cedar trees in Lebanon for me. I will pay them whatever you say and will even make my workers help them. We both know that your workers are more experienced than anyone else at cutting timber. Hiram was so happy when he heard Solomon's request that he said, "I am grateful that the Lord gave David such a wise son to be king of that great nation!" Then he sent back his answer: I received your message and will give you all the cedar and pine logs you need. My workers will carry them down from Lebanon to the Mediterranean Sea. They will tie the logs together and float them along the coast to wherever you want them. Then they will untie the logs, and your workers can take them from there.

To pay for the logs, you can provide the grain I need for my household. Hiram gave Solomon all the cedar and pine logs he needed. In return, Solomon gave Hiram two thousand tonnes of wheat and four hundred thousand litres of pure olive oil each year. The Lord kept his promise and made Solomon wise. Hiram and Solomon signed a treaty and never went to war against each other.

Commentary

King David had always wanted to build a magnificent temple in Jerusalem as a special place for people to worship, but God told him that this privilege would be his son's instead. A period of peace and stability for the nation gave King Solomon the opportunity he needed to begin the enterprise, but he needed friends such as the King of Tyre to make it possible.

The tall cedar trees of Hiram's kingdom would provide wood for the floor, to line the walls and as beams for the roof. The whole project employed thousands of people and helped forge strong trading alliances with neighbouring kingdoms. The temple took seven years to build. When it was dedicated, there was a special service of worship where God's presence was powerfully felt and during which Solomon prayed publicly, pledging himself to be a faithful king and the true successor to his father David.

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Questions

- ▶ How do you think David felt when he learned that he was not going to be the one allowed to build a temple?
- ▶ According to the story, what led Solomon to start building the temple?
- ▶ If you were designing a special building to worship God, what would it look like?
- ▶ What materials and colours would you choose to create a special place for God?



Visual aid

Find a picture of a cedar tree from a book or the internet. There are still cedar trees today in Lebanon, where King Hiram lived. This tree is also part of the design on the Lebanese flag.



Activity idea

Using Lego™, Duplo™ or wooden building blocks, build your own model version of the temple together. You can find suggestions of how it might have looked in a Bible encyclopedia or on the internet. There were steps up to the entrance, flanked by two tall pillars. Inside there were two main rooms—a larger one where the people gathered to worship and a special smaller room at the back, called the Holy of Holies, separated off by a curtain. Around the walls were storerooms.



Prayer idea

Pray together this adapted part of Solomon's prayer from the day when the temple was opened: 'There's not enough room in all of heaven for you, Lord God. How could you possibly live on earth in a temple? But we ask you to answer our prayer. Please watch over us day and night and listen when we turn towards you and pray' (based on 1 Kings 8:27–29).

Key verse

The Lord God promised my father that when his son became king, he would build a temple for worshipping the Lord. So I've decided to do that' (1 Kings 5:5).

New Testament story link

Acts 7:44-50: One of the first Christian leaders of the church, Stephen, speaks about the holy tent and the temple once used by the people of Israel.



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