

1 Kings 6:1-22  
Solomon's Temple  
Sunday February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018

One of the themes underlying the Buildings in the Bible is the long stretches of time that are involved. Truly there is our timing, and then there is God's timing. Our scripture began today, "In the 480<sup>th</sup> year after the Israelites came out of Egypt, in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the 2<sup>nd</sup> month, he began to build the temple of the Lord."

This was after 400 years in Egypt and included their 40 years wandering in the desert. So, 880 years after Joseph went down into Egypt, Solomon began to build the Lord's Temple to hold the Ark of the Covenant to be the focal point of the worship of God for Israel.

The Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting had served the Israelites for 480 years and its' movement and the movement of the Ark of the Covenant make an interesting read in the Old Testament. When you work with God you learn the meaning of "Waiting on the Lord." We want it now and God says, "In my good time, my Kairos moment."

One of the best pieces of wisdom I ever got from an old evangelist who has gone onto his reward is this, he said, "If you got to make the decision now, and you can't wait, it's not from God. God's got all the time in the universe."

Anyway, Solomon's Temple stood for 387 years from 960BC to 587BC when it was destroyed by the Babylonians. In comparison San Xavier del Bac here in Tucson is only 235 years old.

Solomon's Temple was built on Mt. Moriah. Chronicles 3:1 reads, "Then Solomon began to build the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David. It was on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the place provided by David."

This is in the heart of what we call today, “Old Jerusalem” and it is so built up you can hardly even imagine a time in which it was a rural site that grew grain.

Now of course it was built under King Solomon, and not King David, because as I pointed out in a previous message, God forbid King David to build the temple because of all the blood he had shed.

Now this was a magnificent structure in terms of size, and materials used. “The Bible's description of Solomon's Temple (also called The First Temple) suggests that **the inside ceiling was 180 feet long, 90 feet wide, and 50 feet high**. The highest point on the Temple that King Solomon built was actually 120 cubits tall (about 20 stories or about 207 feet).” Joseph Telushkin. Jewish Literacy. NY: William Morrow and Co., 1991

These are the inside dimensions and do not take into account the thickness of the stone walls. It was 16,200 square feet of interior space. It was as tall as a 20 story building. It was an awesome sight for the people of the day.

There are many artists’ renderings of how it must have looked, but this is my favorite one.



It is also on the cover of the bulletin. Note the size of the men standing next to the altar and on the steps to the Temple. I will fill you in about the other objects in the picture in a little bit.

Now it took 6 years to build this Temple. It was begun in 966BC and completed in 960BC at great cost in human toil and financial resources. It took 6 years to build as opposed to the 6 months it will take to build phase 1 of our New Vistas Campaign. Our phase 1 will be 6000 sq. ft. as opposed to 16,000 plus square feet.

“Solomon spared no expense for the building's creation. (He made sure the best was provided for God’s Temple.) He ordered vast

quantities of cedar wood from King Hiram of Tyre, had huge blocks of the choicest stone quarried, and commanded that the building's foundation be laid with hewn stone (not fill dirt).

To complete the massive project, he imposed forced labor on all his subjects, drafting people for work shifts that sometimes lasted a month at a time. Some 3,300 officials were appointed to oversee the Temple's erection. Solomon assumed such heavy debts in building the Temple, that he was forced to pay off King Hiram by handing over twenty towns in the Galilee.” Joseph Telushkin. Jewish Literacy. NY: William Morrow and Co., 1991

The goal of the New Vistas Building Campaign is to raise all necessary funds for Phase 1 over a 3 year period; so that we do not need to carry a mortgage. The goal is that when we hit 80% of the 1.5 million needed we will start to build.

In Phase 1 in the Education Wing, we are building one large multipurpose room along with 4 other multipurpose rooms for children, youth, adults and other uses. The large room will be able to sit 90 around tables; so that we can have lunches like we had last Sunday here in this sanctuary in that new room. Most of our potlucks will be able to fit in that new space.

Now ‘The temple was built for many reasons: to be a meeting place for God and his people, to glorify the name of God, and for the Israelite's sake. The temple was a visual reminder that God was present with his people. In the same way that God did not require a king over his people, he also did not require a temple to be built, but rather it was the people that needed a king and the people needed the temple.’

“We are building to better provide for the present and future ministry and mission needs of Vista Church. These buildings are to fulfill the prayer we pray so often, **“Thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”** These buildings will be a part of the Kingdom of God here on Earth and will do God’s work and will. They are for the spread of the Gospel that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God.”

Again the Holy of Holies is a cube about 32 feet on a side, which we saw in the Tabernacle and we will see again in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Temples and finally in the New Heaven and the New Earth in New Jerusalem. The cube shape is a symbol of the perfection and presence of God.

I want to show you now some of the striking features of the Temple Compound. Here again is the rendition of the front of the temple.



To the right you notice what was called “The Sea” it was a large bronze bowl that stood on the backs of 12 bulls, one for each of the 12 tribes of Israel. How large was it you ask? It held about 12,000 gallons of water. I have a midsize pool in my back yard that holds 8000 gallons. This thing was huge, and it was used by the priests for ritual cleansing before they entered the temple. Here’s another artist’s rendering of it.



In the middle of the picture of the temple it looks like there is a wagon train.



These are what are called “The Baths”. They were for ritual washing of the sacrifices. Again another artist’s rendering of them.



The pillars on each side of the entrance to the temple had names. The one on the left was called “Jachin” and the one on the right “Boaz”. They were made of bronze. Jachin means “He establishes” and Boaz means “In God is strength”. These were two apt reminders as one entered the sanctuary. There is an Upper Room devotional on the back of our bulletins that refers to these two.

Finally, the last striking feature that you would see outside the temple was the Altar for burnt sacrifices. It was huge. It was big enough to burn up an entire bull. Note the horns of the Altar. If you were seeking sanctuary you could grab onto one of these horns and be safe.



Now within the Temple everything was covered in cedar wood and gold. No stone showed on the inside of the temple. The closer you got to the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy of Holies the finer the gold used. The scriptures refer to gold and pure gold objects. I believe it is similar to our designations of 14k gold and 24k gold. Only the best was used in the Temple. Here is a cutaway illustration of the interior of the temple.



Note the cherubim wings cover the Ark of the Covenant. All is very elaborately carved and totally covered with gold. Around the exterior of the sanctuary were 3 stories of storage rooms. I will let you take a moment to study this. Note again the altar for burnt sacrifices, the pillars, the sea, and the bathes.

Only the best was used for God's house. In the next couple of months members of the New Vistas building campaign will be approaching members and friends of our congregation for support for this project. This project is in 3 phases: Phase 1 is our Education and Administrative building along with the nursery.

It is intended to replace all current activities in the Admin Building and Ed's building with multi-use spaces that are bigger, better and brighter. The Large room in the new education wing will be able to sit 90. We had 90 here last week for our Live Streaming luncheon.

Phase 2 will be a new Choir Room and dedicated rooms for elementary children. The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase will be our new Parish or Fellowship hall along with rooms dedicated to youth ministry.

Phase 1 Ed. Nursery and Admin.	= 1.5million
Phase 2 Children's wing, Choir, Storage	= 1.5million
Phase 3 Parish Hall and Youth	= 2million
Total	= 5million

The first two phases will cost about 1.5 million each and the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase about 2 million for a total of about 5 million.

Now we are doing these in phases over 6 to 9 year period because we believe we can raise about 1.5 at a time over 3 year periods. It is our goal NOT to go into long term mortgage debt. Now if someone wants to write us a check for 5 million dollars for the whole Master Plan we will go to work right now, or 1.5million for phase 1. CDO Baptist church is doing their renovations, because someone gave them 8 million; so I believe it is worthy to lay the challenge out.

Solomon's temple was very costly in terms of human toil and resources. "King Solomon conscripted laborers from all Israel—thirty thousand men.

He sent them off to Lebanon in shifts of ten thousand a month, so that they spent one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor.

Solomon had seventy thousand carriers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hills, as well as thirty-three hundred foremen who supervised the project and directed the workers." 1 Kings 5:13-16

Solomon started this project with unbelievable financial resources from his father David, but got so strapped by expenses he had to give 20 cities in Galilee as a pledge of repayment. And he resorted to conscription of his own people. We as a church do not want to be in debt to anyone; so as soon as a building is built it can be put right to use.

In the next several months all of us will be asked to give our best gift to God for this effort of phase 1 of our Master Building plan. We aren't building as lavishly as King Salomon did, but we are building for God's glory and grace, the spread of his kingdom here on earth. For this project you might give or commit to give the largest charitable gift you have ever given. We are looking for the best not just good enough.

I want to tell you a true story from the Butter Ball hotline. *Close to Thanksgiving one year they got a call from a man asking if the 15 year old turkey he had found at the bottom of his chest freezer was safe to eat. They had never had such a question before so they said they would check and call him back. Well when they called him back they said, "Yes it would be safe to eat, but it probably would have lost all of its taste." The guy replied, "That's ok, I'll just give it to my church."*

In Solomon's day, as today God will be asking for your best. So in the meantime pray. Think hard about what you can eventually give.

I know for some in your financial circumstances all you will be able to do is pray, so pray hard!!

Take the puzzle piece that you have or will receive in the mail, pray over it, initial it and return it to this table as a visible symbol of your commitment to God and Vista Church.

Let yourself be piece of solving the puzzle of what God is going to do with us here in this time and this place. Be a part of the present and future of our church.

What is God saying to you and what are you going to do?

Amen