

## Israel as a Monarchy (1100 – 930 BCE)

### *Building the Temple*

**Readings: 1 Kings 5:1-18; 6:1-35; 7:13-51; 9:25; 2 Chronicles 2:1-18; 3:1-17; 4:1-22; 5:1; 8:12-16**

### ***Reflections:***

- The construction of the temple represents one of the primary symbols that are passed down from Israel's story that become redefined in the kingdom and used by the first Christ-followers to capture a higher truth. Here within this story of Israel, the temple represents a permanent lasting structure where God could meet with his people. It was a place built for his name, a place where God's true identity is revealed. Calling someone by name was the foundation for relationship and so this temple was a place for God's name and for people discovering true nature and identity.
- Although God had only wanted a very simple tabernacle or tent, God was willing to bless David's desire to build a temple. Here we see as well how God sees a person's heart and wants to bless their desires, even if they are not quite God's desires. God then uses the temple as a lasting symbol of how he desires to connect relationally with people and to see his people connect relationally with each other. In Ephesians 2:19-22 we read, "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." In the new kingdom Jesus will establish, the temple is now the community of his followers. Their community is the permanent structure God has established for people to come and discover God's true identity and to begin relationship with Him.
- The description of the construction of the temple is very similar to the construction of the tabernacle with two major, noticeable differences. First, the temple is huge compared to the tabernacle. The tabernacle was a small, humble tent where Solomon's temple is massive according to the description. This may reveal the difference between God's valuing of structures versus human valuing of structures. In the construction of God's tent, he really didn't place much emphasis on size or grandeur. Here it appears all about size and structure.

- The second difference is even more significant. The non-Jewish people within their midst were conscripted and used as forced labor to build the temple. Gentiles were forced as slaves to do the majority of the work. What is fascinating is that Solomon was now doing to the Gentiles what the Egyptians did the Israelites. He was using them as slaves to build his big projects. This seems to give us a clue that this temple although still blessed by God is somehow tainted with humanity. This also must raise the question if this temple will one day be a place for the nations. Isaiah will clearly indicate that the temple will one day be a place where the nations of the world will stream to it (Isaiah 2:2). This prophecy will be fulfilled most fully in Christ as his community becomes the temple for the nations of the world.
- One last note, the silence at the construction site was a symbol of humble worship before God. Every stone laid was done so in worship to God. Again this reminds us that in Christ's community, our relationships are to be built as an expression of worship to God.