

1 Kings Chapter 9

Verses 1-2: "Finished ... the king's house": (According to 6:1), Solomon began building the temple in Apr/May 966 B.C. The temple was completed in Oct./Nov. 959 B.C. (6:38). The temple dedication and Solomon's prayer to the Lord occurred 11 months after the completion of the temple in Sep./Oct 958 B.C. The Lord did not appear to Solomon this second time (compare 3:5-14), until Solomon had completed the building of his own palace in 946 B.C. (7:1). Thus, the Lord's response came approximately 12 years after Solomon's prayer and supplication to the Lord recorded (in 8:22-53).

1 Kings 9:1 "And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do,"

Which was done in seven years (1 Kings 6:38).

"And the king's house; his own palace, which was finished in thirteen years (1 Kings 7:1).

"And all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do": All his other buildings, the house for Pharaoh's daughter, the house of the forest of Lebanon, and may include his vineyards, gardens, orchards, and pools of water, made for his pleasure (Eccl. 2:4). In which he succeeded and prospered (2 Chron. 7:11).

1 Kings 9:2 "That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon."

God had appeared to "Solomon previously at "Gibeon" (3:5; see the note on 6:11-13). Additional details as to God's challenge to Solomon on this occasion are recorded (in 2 Chronicles 7:11-22).

1 Kings 3:4-5 "And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that [was] the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar." "In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee."

We are familiar with the message God gave Solomon at Gibeon. God offered Solomon one gift, and Solomon had asked for wisdom to rule his people fairly. God gave Solomon the wisdom, and the wealth to build the temple at this time. Now, everything was completed, and Solomon had dedicated the temple. Solomon's prayer had been in great detail at the dedication of the temple. God showed His approval by His appearance in the smoke that filled the temple. This appearance was possibly, partially in answer to Solomon's prayer. We need not speculate how long it was before the LORD answered the prayer. Prayers are sometimes, answered years later.

Verses 3-9: "The Lord" formally applies the terms of the Davidic covenant to Solomon with the reminder that although the covenant is unconditional, the blessings of that covenant are

individually realizable only through the son of “David,” who is faithful and obedient (see the note on 2 Sam. 7:12-16).

1 Kings 9:3 "And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually."

“Hallowed” The Lord made the temple holy by being present in the cloud (8:10). As proof of the temple’s consecration, the Lord told Solomon that He had put His name there (3:2).

“For ever”: God was not saying He will dwell in that building forever; since in less than 400 years it was destroyed by the Babylonians (verses 7-9). He was saying that Jerusalem and the temple mount are to be His earthly throne as long as the earth remains, through the millennial kingdom (see Isa.2:1-4; Zech. 14:16). Even during the New Heaven and New Earth, the eternal state, there will be the heavenly Jerusalem, where God will eternally dwell (see Rev. 21:1-2).

“Eyes ... heart”: These symbolized, respectively, the Lord’s constant attention toward and deep affection for Israel. By implication, He promised them access to His presence and answers to their prayers.

This was a direct answer to the things Solomon had asked for. God heard the prayer, and said yes. God had accepted the house dedicated to His name. The heart of God was full for the house they built to Him.

Verses 4-9: “Walk ... in integrity of heart” is covenant language. To “serve other gods” was the cardinal sin against the Mosaic Covenant. Apostasy coupled with idolatry would cause the Lord to remove Israel from Her land and abandon the temple.

1 Kings 9:4 "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:"

“If thou wilt walk”: The Lord reiterated to Solomon the importance of obedience to the Mosaic statutes in order to experience the blessings of the Davidic Covenant (2:3-4).

1 Kings 9:5 "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."

In a succession in his posterity, until the coming of the Messiah.

"As I promised unto David thy father, saying, there shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel": Not fail that one of his posterity to sit upon it (see 2 Sam. 7:12).

David was not a perfect man, but his heart was stayed upon God. He loved the LORD with all his heart. Notice, the condition attached to this. The LORD would see that the throne of Solomon would be established from generation to generation, if Solomon remains faithful to the LORD. These are the things David had told Solomon, before he died. Solomon is a great man, but he must keep the laws and the commandments of God to continue in his greatness.

1 Kings 9:6 "[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:"

"If ye ... turn": If Israel ("you" is plural) abandoned the Lord to worship others gods, God would expel Israel from the Land and destroy the temple (verse 7).

1 Kings 9:7 "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:"

Suffer them to be carried captive into other lands, as the ten tribes were into Assyria, and the two tribes to Babylon; which is called a plucking them up by the roots in (2 Chron. 7:20).

"And this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight": As it was when burnt by Nebuchadnezzar.

"And Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people": Both for their sins and for their miseries (see Deut. 28:37). In (2 Chronicles 7:20), the house or temple is said to be made a proverb of.

Just as there were blessings, if he kept the commandments of God, there were curses if he did not keep them. God will leave this house and let it be destroyed, if they become unfaithful to Him. He will help Israel, as long as they are faithful to Him. If they do not remain faithful, He will help their enemies against them.

1 Kings 9:8 "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?"

The house of the most High, as some render it, and in high esteem, fame, and glory, as well as it was built on an high hill, and was itself one hundred and twenty cubits high (2 Chron. 3:4), the Targum is.

"And this house which was high shall be destroyed": Everyone that passes by it shall be astonished; at the ruins of the temple, and of the city of Jerusalem, which had been so magnificent.

"And shall hiss": In scorn and derision of the people of Israel, rejoicing in their ruin.

"And they shall say, why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this house?" Or suffered it to be done, to lay thus in waste and ruins. A land in which it had been said he delighted, and looked unto from one end of the year to the other, and a house he had taken up his dwelling in. Surely something more than ordinary, they suggest, must be the cause of all this.

As long as they stay faithful to the LORD, people will look at the temple with amazement. When they become unfaithful, God will allow the temple to be destroyed, and people will hiss at that fall.

Verses 9:10 – 10:29: On (chapters 4-5), Solomon's wealth was described in terms of food that was shared with his subjects rather than how much gold he possessed. This section emphasizes Solomon's accumulation of gold as a first indicator that Solomon's heart was being led astray by conspicuous wealth obtained from foreign locales. A "talent" was about 70 pounds, so Hiram's gift was an extraordinary amount of wealth.

1 Kings 9:9 "And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil."

"Evil": The destruction of Jerusalem and exile from the Land (verse 8), were predicted by Moses (in Deut. 29:24-28). The devastation of the temple, which came in 586 B.C., graphically demonstrated the Lord's anger against Israel's sin, particularly the sin of idolatry.

When Israel was faithful to the LORD, the people were afraid of them because of their God. When they turn from God to false gods, the LORD leaves the temple and refuses to help the people. Those looking on wonder why their greatness is gone. God loved them enough to bring them out of Egypt and set them up as His people. How could this happen? The LORD brought the evil on them for their unfaithfulness to Him.

Verses 10-14: There are hints of foolishness here as Solomon fails to provide fair compensation to "Hiram the king of Tyre", giving him 20 "cities" of questionable value "in the land of Galilee."

Verses 10-28 (see 2 Chron. 8:1-18).

1 Kings 9:10 "And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house,"

"At the end of twenty years": The completion of the building of the temple (7 years), and the building of Solomon's palace (13 years), would be 946 B.C. (see note on 9:1-2).

1 Kings 9:11 "[Now] Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee."

“Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities”: Solomon sold these 20 cities in Galilee to Hiram in exchange for the gold (about 4.5 tons; mentioned in verse 14). Probably these cities lay along the border between Tyre and Israel, just outside the territory of Asher. Later, Hiram gave the towns back to Solomon (see note on 2 Chron. 8:2).

It appears from this, that Solomon took 20 years to build the temple and the palace (which consisted of several buildings). Hiram had furnished men, cedar trees, and now we read, gold. Solomon had given food to Hiram to feed his household, but Solomon appreciated the work and the raw materials Hiram furnished, more than what the food amounted to. Solomon gave him 20 cities to show his further appreciation for what he had done to help him in his building.

1 Kings 9:12 "And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not."

For these cities, being in or near Galilee, were not far from Tyre.

"And they pleased him not": Being either out of repair, as some think (see 2 Chron. 8:2), or the ground barren, and unfruitful. This was not likely, beings they were in a very fruitful country; as was the tribes on which they bordered. But they were not agreeable to him. They did not suit with the disposition of him and his people, who were given not to husbandry, but to merchandise. And the land about these would require a good deal of pains and labor to till, which they were not used to.

These cities lay on a mountain ridge, and were not very good for raising the food that he needed.

1 Kings 9:13 "And he said, What cities [are] these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day."

Hiram was dissatisfied with Solomon’s payment to him in border towns and so returned their jurisdiction to him (2 Chron. 8:2). The traditional meaning of “Cabul” comes from Josephus, who reads the word *kabal* “as nothing or displeasing”. Apparently, some other means of payment must have been agreed upon, for the two kings remained friends.

“Unto this day” (see note on 8:8).

Hiram wanted some cities that would help with his problems at home. He thought that Solomon had been unfair with him.

1 Kings 9:14 "And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold."

The payment, on any calculation, was a large one, though little more than a sixth of Solomon’s yearly revenue (see 1 Kings 10:14). How it is connected with the previous verses is matter of

conjecture. It may possibly be a note referring back to (1 Kings 9:11), and explaining the amount of gold which Hiram had sent. If this is not so, it would then seem to be a payment in acknowledgment of the cession of the cities, as being of greater value than the debt which it was meant to discharge.

The cities had been in payment for the gold that Hiram had sent. This gold was worth a great deal of money. 120 talents of gold would have been ample payment for 20 prosperous cities. The cities Solomon gave him were not worth that much. A talent of gold is speaking of 125 pounds of gold. This would mean 15,000 pounds of gold.

1 Kings 9:15 "And this [is] the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer."

“And Millo”: A landfill in the depression between the city of David and the temple and palace complex to the north (see 2 Sam. 5:9).

Millo means “the fill” and refers to a series of terraces built into a hillside to support homes (11:27; 2 Sam. 5:9; 1 Chron. 11:8; 2 Chron. 32:5).

“Hazor”: Ten miles north of the Sea of Galilee, Hazor protected Israel’s northeastern entrance from Syria and Mesopotamia.

“Megiddo”: Megiddo guarded a crucial pass in the Carmel Mountains, which linked the valley of Jezreel and the international coastal highway to Egypt.

“Gezer”: Twenty miles west of Jerusalem, Gezer lay in the coastal plain at the intersection of the coastal highway and the main road to Jerusalem.

“Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer,” along with “Jerusalem,” were key Solomonic cities. Each has been carefully excavated and shown to have common characteristics clearly dateable to Solomon’s era. These four cities held strategic importance not only militarily but commercially.

The levy was to raise the money to do all of this. It would be like taxes for us. Solomon spared nothing to build all of this. There were literally thousands of people working for 20 years on this project. The gold and other products used for this construction were tremendous as well. We see that Solomon had built much more than the temple and the palace. He built the wall around Jerusalem, and he built Millo, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. These cities were built for their strategic positions.

1 Kings 9:16 "[For] Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it [for] a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife."

“Gezer” had never been taken by the tribe of Ephraim. It came under control of Israel as a wedding present from “Pharaoh king of Egypt” on the occasion of “Solomon’s” wedding to the Pharaoh’s “daughter” (3:1).

Gezer had been taken and burned by Pharaoh of Egypt. He had given this city as a wedding gift to his daughter and Solomon. Solomon probably, built it in honor of their marriage.

1 Kings 9:17 "And Solomon built Gezer, and Beth-horon the nether,"

“Beth-horon”: About 12 miles northwest of Jerusalem along a road connecting Gibeon with the western lowlands and providing a western approach to Jerusalem (see note on 2 Chron. 8:5).

1 Kings 9:18 "And Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land,"

“Baalath”: The designation of several cities in Canaan (see note on 2 Chron. 8:6).

“Tadmor”: This city was located 16 miles southwest of the Dead Sea on the southeastern boundary of the Land (Ezek. 47:19; 48:28).

1 Kings 9:19 "And all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion."

“Cities of store”: Cities whose primary purpose was to store food (2 Chron. 17:12; 32:28).

“Cities for his chariots”: Solomon built military outposts for his chariots and horses. To defend his kingdom, these garrisons were probably located along key roads throughout the nation. All the cities listed (in verses 15-19), met this requirement.

Solomon had built many cities and forts, and places to house his chariots and his horses. He built all of this for protection of his land and for simple pleasure as well.

Verses 20-23: For “Solomon’s” instituting of forced labor, see the notes on (5:13-14; 5:15-16; see 2 Chron. 8:7-10).

1 Kings 9:20 "[And] all the people [that were] left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which [were] not of the children of Israel,"

Who were not destroyed in the times of Joshua or since, but dwelt in several cities of the land of Israel from those times (see Judges 1:1). Which were not of the children of Israel; not natives of the land of Israel, though they might be proselytes, at least some of them.

Verses 21-22: "A tribute of bondservice": I.e., "conscripted slave labor." See note on 5:13. Only resident aliens permanently became part of this force since the law did not allow Israelites to make fellow-Israelites slaves against their will (Exodus 21:2-11; Lev. 25:44-46; Deut. 15:12-18). Additionally, verse 22 adds that he did not move someone from an established post, even for a specific project.

1 Kings 9:21 "Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day."

The posterity of those left unsubdued in the times of Joshua.

"Whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy": In later times, though now it is thought by some it was not for want of power, but because they had made a covenant with them, as the Gibeonites did. Therefore, they could not, because it would have been a breach of covenant to have destroyed them (see 2 Chron. 8:8).

"Upon these did Solomon levy a tribute of bond service unto this day": Not a tribute of money, which being poor they were not able to pay, but of service. And which being once laid on was continued, and even to the time of the writing of this book.

This is just saying they worked for Solomon and the Israelites, as bondsmen and women. Much of the hard labor was done by these people.

1 Kings 9:22 "But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen: but they [were] men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen."

For that was contrary to the law; they might be hired servants, but not bond servants (Lev. 25:39).

"But they were men of war": Which he kept in pay, a standing army, maintained even in time of peace. In case of necessity, should an enemy attempt to invade or surprise them.

"And his servants": In his family and court, who had offices and employments there.

"And his princes": Ministers of state, counsellors, governors of cities, etc.

"And his captains": Officers in his army.

"And rulers of his chariots and his horsemen": War chariots and troopers (see 1 Kings 9:19).

The Israelites worked in the army. Some of them were servants, but they did not do the heavy labor. Many of them were chosen for the leaders. Bondage was for the foreigners living in their land, not the Hebrews.

1 Kings 9:23 "These [were] the chief of the officers that [were] over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bore rule over the people that wrought in the work."

In building the above houses and cities.

"Five hundred and fifty which bore rule over the people that wrought in the work": (In 2 Chronicles 8:10), they are said to be but two hundred and fifty; now it may be observed, as is by the Jewish writers, that there were three sorts of those rulers. The lowest rank and order of them consisted of 3300, the next of three hundred which were over the 3300, and being numbered with them made 3600 (2 Chron. 2:18). And the highest rank of them was two hundred and fifty, and the middlemost and highest being joined together, as they are here, made five hundred and fifty. Abarbanel reconciles the places thus; the two hundred and fifty were only over those that wrought in the temple. And the five hundred and fifty here were those that were over such that were employed in the various parts of the kingdom.

There were 550 men who were in authority over all the work. These were even over the men that Hiram had sent to do the wrought work.

1 Kings 9:24 "But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David unto her house which [Solomon] had built for her: then did he build Millo."

For the separate palace for "Pharaoh's daughter" (see the note on 7:2-8).

We read earlier that Solomon built this wife, who was the daughter of Pharaoh, a separate house. She did not stay with the other wives and concubines of Solomon.

1 Kings 9:25 "And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, and he burnt incense upon the altar that [was] before the LORD. So he finished the house."

"Three times in a year" points to the three pilgrimage festivals: Unleavened Bread, Weeks, and Tabernacles (Exodus 23:14-16; 2 Chron. 8:12-16). Solomon was still worshiping God at this point, but his focus was increasingly on his wealth and his building projects.

"Did Solomon offer": Once the temple had been built, Solomon's practice of sacrificing to God at the various high places ceased (3:2-4). He kept Israel's three great annual feasts, Passover, Weeks and Booth (Deut. 16:1-17), at the temple in Jerusalem.

There were three very special feasts each year that the Hebrews kept. This is speaking of those. Passover and Tabernacles were the two that were considered the most important. The other could have been Feast of Weeks. Passover and Unleavened Bread were at the same time basically. The burning of the incense was done by the priest on orders of Solomon.

Verses 26-28: Ezion-geber" lay at the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba, giving Israel access to the east and south by water.

"Ophir" was probably in southwestern Arabia (10:11; Job 22:24; 28:16). Hiram's Phoenician "seamen" were some of the most skillful of their day. The "gold" brought in from these expeditions helped finance and decorate Solomon's vast building projects.

1 Kings 9:26 And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which [is] beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom.

"Ezion-geber": Solomon's port located on the modern Gulf of Aqabah. Solomon's commercial enterprises with King Hiram of Tyre were doubtless very profitable for both men (10:11-12; 2 Chron. 8:17-18; 9:21).

This just means that Solomon acquired ships and men, to guard them on the seas. We know that some things were moved over the waterways, as the cedars of Lebanon were. Probably the gold from Hiram was sent by ship, as well. Ezion-geber was the site of Solomon's copper-refining port. The Phoenician technicians of Hiram built this port for Solomon. This Red sea is speaking of the redness of the water. This is also the Gulf of Akabah.

1 Kings 9:27 "And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon."

With respect to the acquaintance of the Phoenicians with this particular sea, it may be observed that they are not unlikely to have had trading settlements there, as they had in the Persian Gulf, even at this early period. The commerce with Ophir was probably an established trade, previously either in their hands or in those of the Egyptians, when Solomon determined to have a share in it. The Egyptians had navigated the other arm of the Red Sea, and perhaps its lower parts, from a much more ancient period (see 1 Kings 5:6).

"Shipmen that had knowledge of the sea": Of sea coasts and ports, of the manner of guiding and managing ships at sea. And of the whole art of navigation, so far as then known, for which the Tyrians were famous (see Ezek. 27:3).

"With the servants of Solomon": To instruct and assist them in naval affairs, they not having been used there unto.

This speaks of something else that Hiram had done for Solomon. The skilled seamen were from Hiram. The servants of Solomon had to be trained as seamen.

1 Kings 9:28 "And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought [it] to king Solomon."

"Ophir": The location of Ophir is unknown. It has been suggested it was located on the southwestern Arabian Peninsula. (1 kings 10:11-12), possible suggests that Ophir was close to or a part of the kingdom of Sheba.

“Four hundred and twenty talents” (2 Chronicles 8:18 has 450 talents).

Now, we see an astronomical amount of gold carried.

1 Kings Chapter 9 Questions

1. When did the LORD appear to Solomon the second time?
2. Where was Solomon, when he heard from the LORD the first time?
3. What had Solomon asked for from the LORD?
4. How had the LORD shown His approval of the temple?
5. What did the LORD say to Solomon in verse 3?
6. What was the condition God set before Solomon, for the kingdom to be established?
7. Why did the LORD love David so much?
8. How can Solomon remain in his greatness?
9. What will God do, if they begin to worship false gods?
10. What will the people, who pass by, do after the destruction?
11. What reason will they give for the destruction?
12. Hiram had furnished Solomon with what?
13. What did Solomon give Hiram in repayment?
14. How long had it taken for Solomon to build the palace and the temple?
15. How did Hiram feel about the cities Solomon gave him?
16. Why did Hiram not like them?
17. What did they begin to call the cities?
18. What does "Cabul" mean?
19. How many talents of gold had Hiram sent Solomon?
20. There were literally _____ of people working for 20 years to build all of this.
21. Who had burned Gezer with fire?

22. What had he done with the city, after he burned it?
23. What were some of the other things Solomon built, besides the temple and the palace?
24. What did he do with the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not killed?
25. What did Solomon make the children of Israel?
26. How many chief officers did Solomon place over the work?
27. How many times a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings?
28. What were the names of the feasts he was keeping?
29. Why did Solomon acquire ships?
30. Who sent shipmen that had knowledge of the sea?
31. How much gold did they ship by sea?