

BUILDING THE TEMPLE

I Kings 6

The connection is easily made through David's desire to build the temple and the Lord's answer. The reason for this answer, as given in I Kings 5:3, should be stressed because of its spiritual meaning. The succession of Solomon and the difference between his reign and David's should be mentioned again. Very little can be done in one lesson with the details of the temple. The fullest statement of these will be found in the Junior notes. Its general characteristics and materials and type of decoration may be covered, and mention should be made of Solomon's dealings with Hiram king of Tyre, as given in I Kings 5.

Doctrinal Points

Our character is built out of the materials we furnish by our choices day by day.

An understanding heart is true wisdom, i.e., the ability to distinguish right from wrong and to choose freely to do right.

When we determine to serve the Lord, all our natural knowledges can be employed in His service.

Notes for Parents

Saul had been told that because of his unwillingness to obey the Lord in all things, his line would not continue on the throne of Israel; and we have seen that the second great king was not Saul's son, but David. David did obey the Lord, and the Lord promised him that there should always be a descendant of his on the throne. Even before he died David had his favorite son Solomon anointed to be the next king. The name *Solomon* means "peace," and Solomon's reign was one of peace and great glory; for David had conquered all of Israel's enemies, and the Lord, in addition to making Solomon very wise, gave him great riches.

Solomon was allowed to build the first temple in Jerusalem. We remember that the tabernacle, although its walls were of boards, was really a tent, because the children of Israel were constantly moving from place to place through the wilderness, and even after they entered the Holy Land, they were in constant conflict and did not have a fixed center for their national life. This is a picture of our own individual state during the greater part of our lives in this world. Spiritually we are constantly changing from one place to another and constantly at war with the weaknesses and evils in our own natures. Our worship of the Lord, our thought about Him and our obedience to His commandments, must go with us from state to state and must keep the quality of childlike dependence upon our Heavenly Father. This is symbolized by the tabernacle.

But when David took Jerusalem, the nation then had a strong, permanent national center and David brought the ark there. Then in the peace which followed David's conquests, Solomon could build the temple, which pictures a lasting spiritual character. Paul says, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of the Lord?"

All the materials for the temple were prepared outside of the city of Jerusalem, so that "there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." By our free choice of right thought and action as we struggle against our temptations from day to day we fashion the materials out of which the Lord is silently building the temple within us—the spiritual character which at the end of our time in this world will stand forth complete as we enter the beautiful world where we shall find our eternal homes.

Primary

Review the names of the three kings and something of the difference between David's reign and Solomon's, which made it possible for Solomon to build the temple. Tell them the difference between a temple and a tabernacle, and take up the temple by comparison. The characteristics of Solomon's reign are important, and his league with Hiram should be described.

David asked the Lord if he might build a temple in Jerusalem to

take the place of the tabernacle he had made for the ark, but the Lord told him through the prophet Nathan that he was not the one who should build the temple. He was to have a son who would build it. This son was Solomon, the third great king of Israel. See if you can learn the names of the three kings—Saul, David, and Solomon—so well that you will always remember them.

Solomon was a very great king. He did not have to fight battles because David had conquered all the enemies. So all through his reign there was peace instead of fighting. Solomon's name means "peace." Early in his reign the Lord offered to grant him a wish, and Solomon wished for a wise and understanding heart so that he could rule his people well. The Lord was pleased with this wish and in addition to a wise and understanding heart gave him great riches. People came from far away just to see his treasures and to ask him questions.

Solomon built several beautiful buildings.

What did he build for the Lord?

What were the outside walls made of?

Where was the stone cut?

What were the inside walls?

The cedar came from the Lebanon mountains.

Hiram, king of Tyre, helped Solomon to get it.

The Holy of Holies, where the ark was kept, was called the oracle or inner sanctuary. Here Solomon set up two giant figures of cherubim, made of olive wood overlaid with gold. Their outspread wings touched in the center over the ark, and they were so big that the other tips of their wings touched the outer walls.

The Lord told Solomon that if the people would truly worship and obey Him, He would always be with them and bless them.

It took seven years to build the temple. When it was finished, Solomon had a great dedication service with sacrifices and a feast, and brought the ark from David's tabernacle and put it in the oracle in the temple.



Junior

It is in this class that the plan and details of the temple should be found most interesting, especially in comparison with those of the tabernacle. This will take most of the lesson time, but be sure the children also understand why Solomon instead of David built the temple.

David was a fighting king. He was successful against his enemies and brought the kingdom of Israel to its greatest extent and power. The Lord had told David through Nathan the prophet that one of his sons was to be his successor. So David, near the end of his life, had Solomon anointed as the next king, and the people accepted Solomon.

The name *Solomon* means “peace.” Solomon had peace throughout his reign, and he reigned, as David did, forty years. Early in his reign he went to Gibeon to make offerings to the Lord. The tabernacle which had been made at Sinai was at this time set up at Gibeon with all its furnishings except the ark. At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and offered to give him anything he asked for. Solomon asked for wisdom. This request and its fulfillment were the cause of Solomon’s greatness. He was so wise that not only his own people but other kings and queens came to listen to him. The Lord also gave him great riches, for which he had not asked. The chapters which tell of his reign are full of descriptions of his possessions.

David had wanted to build a temple in Jerusalem, but the Lord told him that his son should be the one to build it. Our lesson today tells about the building of the temple. This temple which Solomon built was not the one of which we read in the Gospels, but it was in the same place. There are two hills in the city of Jerusalem, Mount Zion and Mount Moriah, separated by a valley. Mount Zion, the western hill, was the fortified citadel, and when David brought the ark to Jerusalem, he placed his tabernacle for it there. But Solomon built the temple on the eastern hill, Mount Moriah (II Chronicles 3:1), and the two later temples, the temple of Zerubbabel and the temple of Herod (the temple of the Gospel story) were built on the same site. Perhaps you remember that it

was on Mount Moriah that Abraham tried to sacrifice Isaac.

What were the dimensions of Solomon's temple?

What materials were used to build it?

What is said about the way in which it was built (verse 7)?

What were the inside walls made of?

The cedar for the walls of the temple, as well as the fir [probably cypress] for the floor and doors, came from the mountains of Lebanon. Hiram, king of Tyre, who was a firm friend of both David and Solomon, furnished the skilled workmen who cut it, and Solomon's men worked with them. Read I Kings 5:8-11 to see what Hiram agreed to do and how Solomon paid for the work.

The details of the structure of the temple are not easy for us to work out from the brief account given in our chapter. There is another account of it as the prophet Ezekiel was permitted to see it in vision many years later. This description is found in chapters 40 to 48 of the book of Ezekiel. A New Church minister, the Rev. T. O. Paine, about a hundred years ago made a very thorough study of the two accounts and has given us in his book what is probably the most accurate picture we can form of the building and its surroundings.* You can see from reading our chapter for today that the proportions of the temple were the same as those of the tabernacle, that it was divided into two parts, as the tabernacle proper was, and that the oracle, which was the Holy of Holies where the ark was placed, was a cube just as it had been in the tabernacle.

The temple, however, being a permanent building, could have additional features. It had a broad porch in front, the roof of which was supported by two great brass columns. These and all the other brass furnishings were cast by another Hiram—not the king—and are described in I Kings 7:15-22. The “chambers” described in verses 5 and 6 of our chapter were built against the side walls of the temple on the outside, but they opened into the temple. These

*T. O. Paine, *Solomon's Temple*, Boston: George Phinney, 1861. (There were also several later editions.) —Ed.

were used as treasure chambers to hold all the gold and silver articles and the trophies of victory. The furnishings of the temple were similar to those of the tabernacle, except that there were ten lamp-stands instead of one in the Holy Place.

From Ezekiel we get an idea of the great outer court, in which were not only the great altar and laver but also ten smaller lavers, as well as chambers for the priests who were on duty, and places for roasting and boiling the parts of the sacrifices which were the portion of the priests for their own eating. And the outer gate was a whole building in itself.

Our chapter tells us also of two figures which Solomon had made for the oracle.

What were they?

Of what were they made?

How tall were they?

How long were their wings?

What were they overlaid with?

Chapter 8 tells of the great feast of dedication when the temple was completed, and of Solomon's prayer that the Lord might always dwell in it to receive the worship of his people and hear their prayers and forgive their sins.

Intermediate

The general meaning of the three kings can be brought out clearly in this lesson. Stress the reason why the temple was built by Solomon and not by David, and the meaning of verse 7. The thought that the Lord builds our character out of the materials we furnish by our choices from day to day is helpful for young people of this age.

We remember that David was a fighting king. Under him all the enemies of Israel were overcome. And he was allowed to conquer Jerusalem and establish the ark of the covenant there in a tabernacle set up on Mount Zion. But because his work was the work of struggle and conquest, he was not allowed to build the temple. We have to fight against temptations, but the state of struggle is not

the ideal state and is only a preparation for the building of heavenly character.

When Solomon, the son of David, succeeded his father on the throne of Israel, one of his first acts was to offer sacrifices to the Lord at Gibeon. Here the old tabernacle and its furnishings had finally been set up, and although the ark had been removed from the Holy of Holies, the regular ceremonies of worship were maintained and it was regarded as the principal place of worship. In going there Solomon was dedicating himself as best he could to the service of the Lord, and it was here that the well-known dream was granted him in which he made the wise choice of an “understanding heart” as the most desirable of all gifts which the Lord could give him. An understanding heart is a synonym for true wisdom, the ability to distinguish between right and wrong and to choose freely to do right. Solomon’s wisdom thenceforward became famous, and kings and queens, like the queen of Sheba, sought his counsel.

Solomon did build the temple. The temple pictures the dwelling place of the Lord in our hearts, and this is built silently by the Lord out of good states which we produce by doing right in our daily life. Every time we make ourselves remember one of the Lord’s commandments and obey it, we are fashioning a “stone” which can be used in our “temple.” Read verse 7. It took seven years to build the temple, just as the building of a true human being, described in the Creation story, took seven days. *Seven* represents what is holy.

You remember that Saul pictures our natural understanding of truth and David our spiritual understanding of it, after we have grown up and learned by experience that we must be ruled by the truth. Solomon pictures the love of truth ruling. When we make ourselves do right because we know we shall get along better if we do, Saul is our king; when we do right because we want to please the Lord, David rules; but when doing right has become our habit and we love to do it, Solomon is on our “throne.”

The difference between the temple and the tabernacle is brought

out in two ways. The tabernacle, as we have seen, represents worship from the heart in a childlike state. The temple, a permanent building made of stone, represents a more mature acceptance of the Lord based on an understanding of the truth, and therefore more permanent. Not only stones went into its construction but also cedar and cypress brought from the mountains of Lebanon with the cooperation of Hiram, king of Tyre. Hiram is the symbol of a right principle governing worldly knowledges. He had been David's friend and had furnished materials for David's house. Now the same Hiram furnishes materials for the temple. When we are bent on serving the Lord, all our natural knowledges can be made useful.

The other representative of the change from the tabernacle to the temple state is found in the change of location from Mount Zion to Mount Moriah. These two hills were both within the city of Jerusalem. Mount Zion, which was the stronghold of the city, represents the "celestial" principle of the church, that is, the love of goodness. Mount Moriah represents the "spiritual" principle of the church, that is, the love of truth.

The plan and proportions of the temple were the same as those of the tabernacle, but some of its furnishings were multiplied, as we learn from chapter 7. Our appreciation of the truths of the Word, like the lampstands in the Holy Place, is multiplied when we have advanced in understanding, and so is our ability to make our outer lives serviceable to the Lord.

Basic Correspondences

- Saul = a natural understanding of truth
- David = a spiritual understanding of truth
- Solomon = truth obeyed from love
- Mount Zion = the celestial church
- Mount Moriah = the spiritual church
- seven = what is holy



Senior

The meaning of the three kings should be made clear in this class. Young people should know that although they will not arrive at the Solomon stage for many years, the state he represents is the ideal toward which they are working. They are preparing materials from day to day from which the Lord can build their characters. They should have clearly in mind from the first what is their part and what is the Lord's, as a check to the universal tendency to self-praise.

The three kings, Saul, David, and Solomon, represent stages in our regeneration. Under Saul we keep the commandments and study the Word from a sense of duty and with the feeling that being Christians will prosper us in the world and get us to heaven. Under David we do the same from an understanding of them and of the Lord's purpose in giving them to us. Under Solomon we study and keep the law because we have learned to love it. Then it is written in our hearts and we no longer are in a constant struggle against our own selfish desires. We are at peace. *Solomon* means "peace." What Solomon asked of the Lord was an "understanding heart."

There is a difference between knowledge, intelligence, and wisdom. One may have a great deal of knowledge, but if he cannot organize it and apply it to his life, he is not intelligent. And he is not wise until he has proved his knowledge and intelligence by experience.

The temple was built under Solomon. David had wanted to build a temple, but the Lord, speaking through Nathan the prophet, told him that his son should be the one to build it, and we learn in I Kings 5:3 that this was because David's work was the work of conquest. While we are fighting our evils and weaknesses we must remain in the childlike state of worship and trust represented by the tabernacle. In overcoming our temptations we are preparing the way for the building of the temple of spiritual character, but it is really the Lord's spirit inflowing in the peaceful times which follow our victories which does the actual building. The same lesson is taught by the fact that "there was neither hammer nor axe nor

any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building.” The materials for the temple, stone and wood—truth and goodness—were brought from outside the Holy Land and each piece was fashioned before it was brought. Our “temple” is built of the truth and goodness we have made our own by shaping our outward lives according to what is true. It rises up silently within us and at the end of seven years—when the Lord sees that we have reached the full measure of holiness we are willing to achieve—it stands forth in its final form as we pass into the spiritual world.

The “oracle” of the temple, or Holy of Holies, was entirely covered within with gold leaf, a symbol of the love which should be within our hearts. When all was complete, the ark was brought into it. Then the “glory of the Lord” filled the temple and Solomon held a solemn dedication service. It is a beautiful picture of a life dedicated to the Lord’s service, with the commandments at the center kept from love to the Lord.

The Lord’s promise to Solomon to add to him riches and glory for which he had not asked was fully kept. The chapters telling of his marvelous possessions picture in the internal sense the spiritual riches of a truly good life. Every detail has its meaning. In its fullest sense we do not reach the Solomon state until our life in this world is over, but we do have repeated experiences of it as we overcome one temptation after another. As we recognize any given evil in ourselves, fight against it with the Lord’s help, conquer it, and come to love its opposite, we experience something of the peace and beauty and spiritual riches which are in store for the faithful, and which are pictured in the story of Solomon’s kingdom.

Adult

In this class, after a brief survey of the lesson, consult the members to see which phase of the subject will make the most profitable discussion. The teacher will need to study not only the chapter for the day but also I Kings 5-9, and should look through Ezekiel 40-48 for additional background.

The three kings all represent the Lord’s truth—or the Word—

accepted as our ruling principle in our adult lives, but with varying degrees of understanding. Natural understanding, pictured by Saul, cannot of itself produce any higher degree. Saul's line had to perish. But spiritual understanding does produce lasting spiritual results. David was promised that there should never be lacking one of his line to sit on his throne, and we remember that the Lord chose to be born into the house and lineage of David. So David's son followed him as king, and Solomon's gift from the Lord was an "understanding heart."

As Jonathan played an important role in the transition from Saul to David, so there was another man—a king—who played an important role in the transition from David to Solomon. Even after a spiritual understanding of truth has wholly succeeded natural understanding as ruler in the life, the natural plane of thought and activity continues as a necessary and serviceable basis of the character. In I Kings 5 this fact is brought out in the agreement between Solomon and Hiram king of Tyre. We are told in the writings that Tyre and Sidon represent knowledges of good and truth (AC 2967) and that Hiram represents the nations that are outside of the church but with whom there are knowledges of good and truth (AE 514⁷). Hiram was a friend of both David and Solomon, helping David in the building of his own house and Solomon in the building of the temple, as well as of his other structures. In the individual life Hiram pictures our good "Gentile" states, states in which we are absorbed in learning scientific and rational truths and training our minds in intelligent thinking, not seeing clearly perhaps the relation to the Lord and the church of what we are doing, but intending to make unselfish use of whatever we acquire of knowledge and ability. All that we gain in this way can be made serviceable to our regeneration, first in developing orderly spiritual thinking—David's house—and later in building true heavenly character, the church in us, for which the temple stands. When the knowledge and ability we have gained is thus used to build up the church in us, this very outer region of our minds is fed with truth and good from the Lord and lives from Him: "And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand

measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.” An example of this process might perhaps be found in our acquisition of the knowledge of ancient history and the habit of trying to trace historical causes. We find such study interesting and desire to make it useful in some way. Then, once we catch a glimpse of the correspondence of the ancient people and lands and begin to see their history as spiritual drama and, in the Word, relate it to the Lord’s life and to our own spiritual states, our knowledge of ancient history “comes alive,” and every detail that we have stored in our memory becomes useful in our spiritual development and is filled with higher and deeper meaning.

David wished to build the temple of the Lord but was told through Nathan the prophet that this privilege must be left for his son. Solomon gives us the reason for this in his reply to Hiram: “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 had put them under the soles of his feet.” Heavenly character, the house of the Lord in us, is not built by our own knowledge or rationality, even when that is spiritually enlightened; nor is it built while we are passing through temptation. It is built in the states of peace which follow victories, built by the Lord’s spirit flowing in silently where the enemy has been cast out.

Swedenborg tells us many times to guard against the thought that what goodness we have is our own, and tells us that it is always the Lord’s goodness in us. We merely open the door by turning away from evils and toward the Lord. So the temple was built silently, every piece having been prepared elsewhere, as the various truths and goods which go to make up a heavenly character come to us as a result of experiences in every field of our activity, and our character grows silently through our full period of opportunity, which is our life in this world. “So was he seven years in building it.” Swedenborg gives us a further suggestion as to the reason why Solomon and not David was permitted to build the temple. In

DP 245, in discussing the relative meaning of David and Solomon, he says that the temple signifies both the Divine Human and the church: David could not build it because he represents the Lord before His coming into the world, whereas Solomon represents the Lord after His coming. Another interesting thought is suggested in AE 654³³: “As every man of the church has a spiritual, a rational, and a natural, therefore Solomon built three houses, the house of God or the temple to stand for the spiritual, the house of the forest of Lebanon for the rational (for ‘cedar’ and thence ‘Lebanon’ signifies the rational), and the house of the daughter of Pharaoh for the natural.” That is, when the soul has really found rest in the Lord, it takes on an appropriate and beautiful form not only with reference to things of the church, but with reference to intellectual and even to external worldly things.

In studying the correspondence of the various details of the temple, we should recall our knowledge of the tabernacle and consider the similarities and the differences between the two. The tabernacle represents the celestial church and the temple the spiritual church (AR 585), the tabernacle being the Lord’s dwelling place in a more childlike, less intellectual stage of development. In HH 223 we are told that the houses of worship in the celestial heavens are of wood, while those in the spiritual heavens are of stone, because wood corresponds to good and stone to truth. Thus the walls of the tabernacle were of wood, but those of the temple were of stone. The cedar with which they were covered pictures the good coming from the rational understanding of truth. This could be carved into beautiful forms of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, which suggest thoughts about the Lord’s providence, His saving power, and the great variety of blessings which come to us from Him. The gold which overlaid it is the love which makes the truth beautiful. In II Chronicles 3:1 we learn that Solomon’s temple was built on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem instead of on Mount Zion, where David’s tabernacle had been. Swedenborg tells us in many places that Zion represents the celestial church. Therefore it was fitting that a tabernacle should have been erected there

but that the temple, which represents the spiritual church, should in the letter have been built on Mount Moriah. Wherever Zion and Jerusalem are mentioned together in the Word, Zion refers to the celestial church and Jerusalem to the spiritual church.

The brief account of the structure of the temple which is given in our chapter is filled in and amplified in the description of it as it was showed to Ezekiel in vision some years after its destruction (Ezekiel 40-48). From a long study of the two accounts the Rev. T. O. Paine, a New Church minister, in the middle of the last century demonstrated the identity of the two by drawing a careful plan of the temple as given in our chapter and an equally careful one of the temple of Ezekiel's vision and finding that when the two plans were superimposed, they not only coincided, but each supplied details which the other lacked, indicating that they were intended to be complementary.

From the Writings of Swedenborg

Arcana Coelestia, n. 7847⁴: “. . . in the supreme sense by ‘temple’ is meant the Lord as to the Divine Human, as He Himself teaches in John 2:19-22. Therefore in the representative sense by a ‘temple’ is meant His church. . . . Because the ‘posts’ and ‘lintels’ signified the truths and goods in the natural which serve for introduction . . . therefore in the temple of Solomon the posts were made of olive wood . . . ‘Olive wood’ signified the good of truth, or the good which is of the spiritual church.”

Suggested Questions on the Lesson

- J. What was David's principal work? *conquering enemies*
- J. Why could he not build the temple? *needs time of peace*
- P. Who did build it? *Solomon*
- P. What does the name *Solomon* mean? *peace*
- J. Who furnished some of the materials for the temple? *Hiram*
- J. How did Solomon pay him? *grain, oil, cities*
- P. What were the principal materials? *stone, cedar, gold*
- J. How was the temple like the tabernacle? *same general plan*
- J. How was it different? *more elaborate, permanent*
- J. Where in Jerusalem was it built? *Mount Moriah*

202

BUILDING THE TEMPLE

- J. Why was it built more quietly than most buildings? *stone cut and shaped at quarry*
- P. How long did it take to build it? *seven years*
- I. What are pictured by (1) Saul, (2) David, and (3) Solomon? *obeying truth from (1) duty, (2) reverence, and (3) love*
- S. What is meant in our lives by David's not being permitted to build the temple? *character takes final form only after temptation battles*
- S. What is meant in our lives by the temple materials' being prepared before they were brought to Jerusalem? *forming character by right actions in outer, everyday life*