

### 1<sup>ST</sup> KINGS

#### Week 12, chapter 7

We are most of the way through the description of the 1st Temple and its ornate and varied furnishings. We'll finish that discussion today and then before we study the all-important consecration of Solomon's Temple that appears in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings Chapter 8, we'll spend the rest of our time today following the saga of the 1<sup>st</sup> Temple through almost 4 centuries of Israelite history until it is finally destroyed at the hands of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar. The saga of the Temple is quite instructive because it essentially gives us an overview of the several kings of Israel and Judah, and what we'll see is that there were some good ones and some very wicked ones.

Last week we ended by talking about the Molten Sea, which was a huge pot of water that held around 12,000 gallons of *mayim chayim* (living water). Living water was not water that had been ritually "blessed"; it was merely water from a moving source like a river or artesian spring. It was the priests and not any other who used the water from the Sea, and it was primarily for the washing of hands and feet. The purpose of washing was for sanctification. By means of washing the hands and feet, which represented the extremities of the body, these priests were demonstrating the complete devotion of their entire bodies to the Lord, and especially to the ritual services that they were about to perform on behalf of the people of Israel. It is from this ritual washing that the priests did that the Sages eventually (well before Jesus' day) made it a tradition that all Jews should do a ritual hand washing before they pray or eat.

We should not leave this subject of the Molten Sea without noting that in Ezekiel's Temple of a future time (during the Millennial period); there will be no Molten Sea. And while Christ is reigning there WILL also be rituals at the Temple. What we see is that much like what happens after heaven and earth have passed away all is made new (after the end of the 1000 Reign of Messiah), and certain elements of Temple worship that at an earlier time were earthly symbols of heavenly things, have now been replaced by the heavenly things themselves.

Thus Ezekiel 47:1 tells us in his divine vision for the Millennial Temple:

***CJB Ezekiel 47:1 Then he brought me back to the entrance of the house, and I saw water flowing eastward from under the threshold of the house, for the house faced east. The water flowed down from under the right side of the house, south of the altar.***

So during the Millennium Kingdom period we have living water flowing from under the Temple itself, with God as its source. This never-ending source of mayim chayim, which will be used for sanctification, means that there is no longer a need to gather living water through pipes to be placed in this great pot called the Molten Sea. We find a parallel situation in the new earth at the end of the Millennium when there is NO Temple, but instead God is the Temple.

***CJB Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer there.***

Notice, by the way, that we're told that the "sea" is no longer there. Although the usual interpretation of this is that the term "the sea" is referring to our oceans, I think it is NOT referring to the oceans at all, but rather the Molten Sea, that great pot of water that at one time was central to priestly ritual. What we need to see is that just as the entry into the Millennial Kingdom began a series of changes to move us closer and closer to a full spiritual reality of God's principles, and further and further away from the physical objects of ritual that were merely shadows and patterns of God's divine principles, so after the Millennium in the new earth we come full circle. Not only is there no longer a sea (the Molten Sea), there isn't even a physical Temple!

(Rev 21:21-27 CJB)

***<sup>21</sup> The twelve (city) gates were twelve pearls, with each gate made of a single pearl. The city's main street was pure gold, transparent as glass.***

***<sup>22</sup> I saw no Temple in the city, for ADONAI, God of heaven's armies, is its Temple, as is the Lamb.***

***23 The city has no need for the sun or the moon to shine on it, because God's Sh'khinah gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.***

***24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.***

***25 Its gates will never close, they stay open all day because night will not exist there,***

***26 and the honor and splendor of the nations will be brought into it.***

***27 Nothing impure may enter it, nor anyone who does shameful things or lies; the only ones who may enter are those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.***

Thus not only is no physical Temple needed because God (who is spirit) is the Temple, there is no sun or moon, because we don't need physical light (light waves) any longer. And we won't need physical light waves because our physical eyes that require physical light waves to operate have been exchanged for bodies and eyes that are now completely perfected and thus fully spiritual in nature. So instead of the light emitted from the sun and the moon we will bask in the Lord's spiritual illumination for all eternity.

Thus we see the progressive revelation of the Temple that originally began in heaven as a spiritual ideal, and in time it became a physical object built by men's hands beginning with Moses and the Wilderness Tabernacle, and finally at the time of a new earth it completes a full circle as it returns to being of totally spiritual substance in which God Himself is that Temple. And this is why as Believers we need to study the Temple from beginning to end and in all of its various stages because its journey reveals a divine pattern.

Let's get to the next objects used in Temple service by reading the remainder of 1<sup>st</sup> Kings Chapter 7.

**READ 1<sup>ST</sup> KINGS 7:27 – end**

Ten laver stands made of bronze were built by Hiram the skilled craftsman, so that several substantial-sized pots of living water were mobile and could be moved around the inner

courtyard. They generally consisted of two parts: the lower part with the wheels called the trolley (*mekonah* in Hebrew) that really means “base”, and the upper part that was called the basin or laver (*kiyyor* in Hebrew). But in western thinking a base with wheels becomes a trolley, thus that's the way it often appears in English Bibles (as it does in the CJB).

They were very ornate, once again decorated with Cherubim. Lions and oxen were also included in the design along with palm trees.

These trolleys were quite large; however there is disagreement over whether the quoted measurement of 4 cubits (around 7 feet) in the Scripture passage is referring to the diameter of the water basin or its height. The CJB makes it the diameter, which is possible since it is the same as the width and length of the trolley meaning it would be stable when moved. However most Jewish sources say that the 4 cubits was the height of the basin and not the diameter. Yet if you put a 4 cubit high water laver on top of a 3 cubit high rolling platform ( that's about 5 ½ feet) that means that the rim of the laver of water was somewhere around 11 to 12 feet off the ground. No priest could ever reach the water without a ladder. So my opinion is that the water basin was rather large in diameter (7 feet) but also rather shallow and so not very tall. That would allow for priests to dip into it with only needing perhaps a foot stool of some sort to reach the water.

These rolling lavers of living water were moved all around the courtyard so that the meat from the slaughtered animals could be ritually washed with water. Note that these pots of water were NOT used for ritual washing of the priest's hands or feet as was the water from the Molten Sea. There were so many people coming with their sacrifices at any given moment that they had to spread out and make use of the entire Temple courtyard; thus was the reason for the 10 rolling lavers that could be repositioned as needed.

We are told that these held around 220 gallons of water (probably a bit more, actually). When they weren't in use they were located neatly in two rows of 5 in front of the Temple entrance. 5 lavers were located on one side of the entry door, and 5 on the other side. Some of the objects were made in the Jordan River Valley between an area called Tzartan and Succoth. Other objects were no doubt made in the Timna region inland of the Dead Sea. Which was made where is difficult to know; but it's hard to imagine that these dense metal objects were made on the eastern side of the Jordan River because then they'd have to somehow transport them across the water.

Beginning with verse 49 the subject changes from these large objects that were cast in bronze by Hiram, to the more important, sacred and decorative objects that were made with gold (and some with silver). The verse begins by saying that King **Shlomo** made these golden objects, but that doesn't mean that he did so personally. It simply means that he oversaw the project and that it was his administration that provided them (the purpose was to explain that these objects weren't added later by other kings of Israel). The idea was to give Solomon the credit.

Among the objects made of gold was the **menorah**; or better, the **menorot** (plural) because **Shlomo** had 10 of them made as opposed to the original one **menorah**. Verse 48 also speaks of two other Temple furnishings made of gold: the Incense Altar and the table where the loaves of Shewbread were stacked. In addition there were various tongs and plates and bowls and pitchers, etc.

The chapter ends with Solomon giving the large amounts of expensive objects that his father David had collected for either use in the Temple or for financing its construction. However for some reason Solomon decided not to use them for Temple service and instead merely to store them in the Temple treasury. The Hebrew scholar Abarbanel suggests that the reason for this decision was rather straightforward: it was due to the prophetic message given to David through **Natan** the prophet. And the message was that David was not to be engaged in building the Temple. That David went ahead and drew up plans, started collecting timbers from Lebanon, having implements for the Temple designed and manufactured, and more was not a legitimate thing for him to have done. It may have followed the letter of God's oracle to David (not to **build** a Temple), but not the spirit. David was to have NOTHING to do with the Temple; that was reserved for Yehoveh and **Shlomo**. David being the headstrong person he had become thought he had a loophole: he'd make all the preparations and plans for the Temple but he wouldn't actually construct it. He'd control it from the grave. Doesn't that sound an awful lot like us? It is clear from either the words of the Holy Scriptures or from godly wisdom given to us by someone that there is something we must not do; but we'll immediately start searching for a loophole that brings us right up to the edge so that we can get most of what we want, but say that technically we were obedient to God. I don't think God buys that kind of convoluted rationale from us anymore that He did from David.

Now that the Temple and its furnishing have been completed, and we have a pretty good idea of what it all looked like, let's go on a journey to see what happened to this Temple from its birth to its destruction.

We know that the Lord told Moses while he was on the exodus journey that in time there was to be but one authorized place of worship and sacrifice for all Israel. That instruction is

recorded for us beginning in Deuteronomy 12:5.

### Deut. 12:5-9 CJB

***<sup>5</sup> Rather, you are to come to the place where ADONAI your God will put his name. He will choose it from all your tribes; and you will seek out that place, which is where he will live, and go there.***

***<sup>6</sup> You will bring there your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tenths [that you set aside for ADONAI]], the offerings that you give, the offerings you have vowed, your voluntary offerings, and the firstborn of your cattle and sheep.***

***<sup>7</sup> There you will eat in the presence of ADONAI your God; and you will rejoice over everything you set out to do, you and your households, in which ADONAI your God has blessed you.***

***<sup>8</sup> You will not do things the way we do them here today, where everyone does whatever in his own opinion seems right;***

***<sup>9</sup> because you haven't yet arrived at the rest and inheritance which ADONAI your God is giving you.***

However Israel was anything but quick to obey. They built high places (***bamah***) as personal and private family worship centers. The various tribal coalitions didn't all recognize the traditional site where the remnants of the Wilderness Tabernacle was erected as that single authorized place of worship.

The evidence is that there was a Temple in operation in Jerusalem almost continuously from the time Solomon built and completed it around 960 B.C. until 586 B.C. when the Babylonians razed it. But there were changes and modifications to it, as well as allowing it to deteriorate or be stripped of its valuable materials, over that nearly 4 century time span.

Shortly after Shlomo died the Kingdom of Israel fell into a civil war and divided. The united kingdom of all 12 tribes that developed and thrived under David and Solomon split online long-held traditional tribal lines that can be identified and followed since the exodus. There had been separate northern and southern tribal coalitions since the days of Joshua and that is

more or less the same way the nation divided. Thus following Solomon there were now 2 kings over 2 kingdoms: Rehoboam King of Judah, and Jeroboam King of Israel.

Let me take one moment to explain something that I've addressed before, but it is so very important to our understanding of the remainder of the Bible and even of prophetic happenings that are current and future to our modern time. What we read in the next several chapters and books of the Old Testament is of two kingdoms: one called Judah and one called Israel. But in reality, the one called Israel was only a coalition of a group of 10 tribes usually identified as the northern coalition. And it only used the name Israel for a handful of decades after the civil war split Solomon's former united kingdom. Rather, that 10 tribe northern coalition was dominated by the tribe of Ephraim and so that kingdom was named after and called Ephraim. Thus within 30 – 50 years after Solomon's death in 925 B.C. there was the Kingdom of Judah, and the Kingdom of Ephraim (also known as the Kingdom of Israel or even Ephraim/Israel).

In the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Rehoboam's reign (he was the King of Judah), Shishak the Pharaoh of Egypt attacked and plundered the Temple in **Yerushalayim**. The Egyptians took much of the precious gold and silver implements, furnishings, and items stored in the Temple and its warehouses. One can easily imagine that from Shishak's perspective this wasn't looting but rather restitution for all the gold and silver that the Israelites received from the Egyptians and took with them as they exited Egypt under Moses. This was the first major change to Solomon's Temple.

Up in the north the King of Israel, Jeroboam, ignored the Temple in Jerusalem and instead established two worship centers for his kingdom: one in Dan and one in Bethel (one for the people living to the north, one for the people living in the southern end of his kingdom). What went on in those places that purported to be worship of the God of Israel was sickening. Calf worship was established at Dan, and all sorts of abominable cult practices were instituted. A separate priesthood was ordained. I have taken a number of tour groups to visit Dan, and the syncretism that took place there becomes immediately obvious. Even the remains of a square, horned altar (typical of the Temple altar) is still visible, but the people of the 10 northern tribes mixed in the worship of animals, of Ba'al, and there is strong evidence of human sacrifice.

**Asa** succeeded Rehoboam as King of Judah and ruled over Judah for about 40 years until 868 B.C. At the encouragement of his father **Aviyah**, **Asa** tried to replenish the many gold and silver vessels that had been taken from the Temple by Shishak. But in just a few years he used those same expensive and valuable vessels to buy the mercenary services of Ben-hadad, King of Syria, in order to defend himself against **Baasha**, who was now the King of Ephraim/Israel. The Scriptures seem to indicate that Asa also used some the Temple items to finance matters

of his administration to his political benefit.

**Asa's** son was **Y'hoshaphat** and he inherited the monarchy directly from his father and reigned over Judah for 20 years. He seemed to be a king that the people liked and respected, and thus was given valuable gifts of which many were used to restore the looted ones from the Temple.

He was also a man who tried to bring some godliness back to his people and so sent some priests and Levites on a journey to the various clans of Judah to teach them the Torah. We're told that they took with them the "Law", which probably meant what we today call the Book of Deuteronomy. And this is because we know that Deuteronomy was stored OUTSIDE and alongside the Ark of the Covenant, and not inside with the two stone tablets from Mt. Sinai. Thus the High Priest would have not been too fearful of borrowing the scroll for a while.

Jehoshaphat King of Judah created an alliance with **Ahav**, King of Ephraim/Israel through the usual means: his son married **Ahav's** daughter. The two kings battled alongside one another against a foreign force from Aram, and as a result of coming very close to being killed, a certain prophet informed **Y'hoshaphat** that the Lord was not happy with him so this seemed to spark another round of religious reforms in Judah. In addition he made some improvements to the Temple by constructing another courtyard near to the Temple. Likely this was an expansion of the existing one that he deemed as simply too small. During his era the hilltop of Moriah was being modified and expanded, with the shallow valleys next to the hill being filled with the soil of the low ridges that surrounded them, thus making the area level enough to add more buildings and defensive walls.

However after Jehoshaphat's death the next several kings were bad kings and did very evil things. Jehoram succeeded Jehoshaphat for a little over a decade. He was succeeded by Ahaziah who barely lasted a year. Athaliah then took over and he managed to hang on to the throne for about 5 years. His sons were worthless men who robbed the Temple of valuable treasure for personal gain and gave some of it to the Temple of Ba'al. It's not that the Temple in Jerusalem ceased to operate, but one can only imagine the strain and strangeness of what went on there in order to appease this wicked king and his sons.

But Athaliah also had another son, a young one, named **Yoash**. He reigned from 840 to about 800 B.C. During this time there was a High Priest named Jehoida that seems to have been quite strong and was given much authority to try and restore some sanctity to the Temple



operations as well as to instill a proper piousness in the people of Judah. He even organized the Levites into guard units and one of the units was assigned to watch over The Gate of the Foundation. This was apparently a new gate into the Temple area that was essentially built as a means to restore the Temple building or even to keep it from collapse. After all, by now the original Temple was over 150 years old and had seen much calamity and been looted on a number of occasions.

King **Yoash** was truly a reformer, but it appears that the elderly High Priest Jehoida was his mentor and guide. For several years **Yoash** collected funds from his fellow countrymen to restore the Temple and it seems that the northern kingdom of Ephraim probably contributed as well. 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 24 especially records this restoration project and the words are that the project was indeed completed. So apparently the Temple was fully restored; how close to the original is anyone's guess, but I can easily imagine that by now what the original as built by King **Shlomo** exactly looked like was not even known. Unfortunately the death of the High Priest led to **Yoash** backsliding and losing his direction, and once again the Temple fell into disrepair.

**Amaziah** took over after **Yoash**, but during his reign the Temple was again looted; however this time it wasn't a foreign enemy doing the looting but rather the new king of Ephraim/Israel who did it (whose name also happened to be Joash.....of course this was a different Joash), and he did it mainly for retribution against **Amaziah**.

After him came his son **Uzziah** and he takes us to the mid 700's B.C. For awhile Uzziah had a listening ear to the wise and godly council of Zechariah and so Judah regained some stature and influence in the region. Uzziah's successes seemed to go to his head because for whatever reason he decided that he wanted to be the one to burn incense on the Altar of Incense inside the **hekal**, the Holy Place inside the Temple. That was a definite no-no as this ritual and even entry into the Holy Place was restricted by Torah Law to the priests, and as a result Uzziah was cursed with **Tzara'at**. Most Bibles call this leprosy, but that's simply not so. **Tzara'at** could indicate any number of skin diseases, but the point was that this skin disease was seen as a direct act of Yehoveh to supernaturally take the inner condition of the person (as God sees them) and have them wear it on their exterior (their skin), exposed for all to see.

It was during this same era that the prophets Amos and Isaiah lived and they both warned of a coming earthquake. It happened in the last year of Uzziah's reign and the quake severely damaged not just the building of the Temple but seems to have actually disturbed the foundation. And by the way: Zechariah is the one who said that far into the future there would

one day be another earthquake so violent that the Mount of Olive would literally split and separate into hills. This event is of course what the Church generally says marks the return of the Lord, when His foot touches down on the Mt. of Olives and sets off that devastating earthquake that even produces a new river that runs all the way to the Dead Sea. And, interestingly, such a thing is entirely geographically possible because the Dead Sea is nearly 4000 feet lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

After Uzziah's time it was **Yotham's** turn to rule Judah and he oversaw many repairs to the badly damaged Temple; he also constructed the so-called Upper Gate (yet another new addition to the Temple), and no doubt this had much to do with stabilizing the structure and the grounds. But **Yotham's** son **Ahaz** took over after he died in 742 B.C. and **Ahaz** was a demon on steroids! He so wrecked the Temple that following him a long and extensive refurbishment of it was needed. **Ahaz** no sooner became king than (as noted in 2Kings 16) he extracted all the wealth he could from the holy building and gave it to Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria in order to woo him as an ally. Not only that but when **Ahaz** went to visit Tiglath-Pileser up in Syria he was so impressed with a certain altar to their god that he wanted one just like it for himself. The altar Solomon had built was now replaced with this new pagan-styled one, and the original altar was unceremoniously shoved out the way.

But that was just the beginning. **Ahaz** defaced the Molten Sea but taking it down off the backs of the bronze oxen, he cut the legs off of the rolling water lavers, and even rededicated part of the Temple complex to the Assyrian god. He also ordered the building of a large number of other altars to various gods all over Jerusalem. The Temple became so ruined, and the priests so enraged, that he responded by shuttering the Temple doors and ending the Temple rituals.

But God was not yet done with His Temple. Soon there would arise a king who would restore this dilapidated and defiled place to glory.

We'll begin with that next time.