



1 KINGS 1-11

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Growth Groups Material

(7 Studies)

Aug-Oct 2021

Introducing 1 Kings 1-11

The story so far...

After creation and the fall, God set about putting things right again through Abraham and his family. He promised Abraham a multitude of descendants who would inherit land and would be blessed by God. In fact, the whole world would be blessed through this nation (Genesis 12:1-3). However, Abraham's family, and the fulfillment of these promises, faced a setback when they found themselves enslaved in Egypt. God showed his great power and love for his people by rescuing them from Egypt and entering into a covenant with them - a covenant full of promises, warnings and all kinds of regulations governing the relationship between God and his chosen people (Exodus-Deuteronomy). God eventually led them into the promised land of Canaan (Joshua). After a rough start (Judges), the people asked God to give them an earthly king like the other nations. So He did. First Saul, and then David (1-2 Samuel). 1 Kings picks up the story towards the end of David's life.

⇒ Take a moment to look up and read these passages – a 'highlights reel' of the story so far, including some of the important promises and some ready-made summaries from within the Scriptures itself: Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:3-6; Deuteronomy 4:32-39; Joshua 24:1-13; 2 Sam 7: 1-16.

What's the purpose of 1 & 2 Kings?

1 & 2 Kings was written for God's people in exile in Babylon. They'd lost God's land, king, city and temple. It seemed like the forces of this world had overwhelmed God and his promises. If the God of Moses did exist, and was good and all-powerful, how was it that God's chosen city and temple had been destroyed. Why has God's chosen royal family all but come to its end? The answers in 1 & 2 Kings are simple, but profound. God's people were being judged by God for their ongoing sin – led by their kings.

However, there is still hope, because 1 & 2 Kings reveals that history is not determined by human forces, but by God keeping his promises. In these books we see a partial fulfilment of God's promises to David (to establish the kingdom of his son), but the ultimate fulfillment was still to come. 1 & 2 Kings is also written for us! God has now appointed

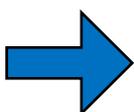
Jesus – descended from David, raised from the dead- to rule His kingdom forever. In 1 & 2 Kings God has given us wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:15).

What about 1 Kings 1-11?

1 Kings 1-11, which is our current focus, conveys the glorious start to God's earthly kingdom in the nation of Israel and the reign of its third monarch, King Solomon.. All of God's promises to the Abraham and his descendants were seemingly being fulfilled: a son of David on the throne; rest from enemies; a large population, material prosperity; a place being built to 'house' God, the fame and honour of God's people amongst the nations. It's a glimpse of how perfect life could be when God's Kingdom functions properly. However, Solomon's heart isn't perfect. Throughout these chapters there's some worrying signs about the kind of king he will turn out to be. And so some questions linger..."Will these idyllic circumstances last?", and "Is Solomon the ultimate king that we all need?"

An outline of 1-2 Kings

<i>1 Ki 1-11</i>	<i>Solomon's reign</i>
<i>1 Ki 12-2 Ki 10</i>	<i>The Divided Kingdom and the ministries of Elijah and Elisha</i>
<i>2 Ki 11-17</i>	<i>Judah and Israel to the fall of the Northern Kingdom</i>
<i>2 Ki 18-25</i>	<i>Judah to the fall of Jerusalem</i>



Did you know you can also access devotional material on 1 Kings for families and adults on the church website:

<https://jannalianglican.org.au/jannali-bible-devotions/>

Teaching Series and Booklet Contents

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Additional Resources

1.	Map of Kingdom of David and Solomon Holman Bible Publishers, 1992	p.12
2.	Bible Timeline https://visualunit.me/2010/03/18/bible-timeline/	p.13
3.	Chart: The trajectory of God's Kingdom Vaughan Roberts, <i>God's Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible</i> , InterVarsity Press, 2012.	p.14
4.	Illustration of Solomon's Temple (ESV Study Bible) https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/illustration-11-solomons-temple/	p.15
5.	Selected glossary of characters and terms in 1 Kings	p.16
6.	Introduction to 1 & 2 Kings (<i>link to website only</i>) https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/course/1-2-kings	n/a

Study 1 | 1 Kings 1-2 | Solomon's Kingdom

Behind the events of 1 Kings 1-2 is God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:11-16:

*"The Lord declares to you: The Lord Himself will make a house for you. **12** When your time comes and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.... **16** Your house and kingdom will endure before Me forever, and your throne will be established forever."*

Later, Solomon is born to David's wife, Bathsheba and is marked out as special: *"The Lord loved him"* (2 Sam 12:24-25). We also learn that David had sworn an oath to Bathsheba that Solomon would be his successor (1 Kings 1:13 & 1:29—30). Let's see how Solomon came to be king, and then reflect on what it means for us today. (If time is short just read chapter 1 and skim – or summarize - chapter 2. For variety, consider reading some sections together, and some individually.)

1. **Read 1 Kings 1:1-10.** What forces, circumstances and "red flags" do you see here that might tempt us to think that God's promises about David's son, and David's oath about Solomon, won't be fulfilled? (For some hints on "red flags" see 2 Samuel 11:2-3 & 15:1-6)
2. **Read 1 Kings 1:11-40.** What got frail old King David to act, and have Solomon anointed as his successor?
3. **Read 1 Kings 1:41-53.** Why did Adonijah tremble (v 49) when he heard that God's anointed king was on the throne?
4. **Read 1 Kings 2:1-11.** What do you make of David's last words to his Son? What shaped his hope?
5. **Read 1 Kings 2:12-46.** Why were Adonijah, Joab and Shimei put to death? Do you think Solomon's first actions are worthy of a wise and just king? Why or why not?
6. The ultimate fulfillment of God's promise to David is Jesus (Romans 1:1-4). In what ways does the establishment of Solomon's kingdom foreshadow Jesus? In what ways is Jesus different?
7. *"The kingdom was established in Solomon's hand"* (2:46). Through all the human politics and powerplays in these chapters, God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 is fulfilled. What does this illustrate about the interplay between God's promises and human actions? See a similar interplay in Acts 2:22-24 & Phil 2:12-13.
8. The first readers of 1 Kings were probably Israelites in exile in Babylon, wondering what had become of God's promises. How would reading of the establishment of Solomon's kingdom given them hope?
9. What promises of God are we relying on now? What things do we see in the world around us that can tempt us to think that God's promises won't be fulfilled? How does this opening section of 1 Kings give us hope to keep seeking God's Kingdom and working hard to make and grow disciples of all nations?

Study 2 | 1 Kings 3 | Solomon's Wisdom

1. Consider 21st Century Australia. Where would we typically look to find, or acquire wisdom?
2. **Read 1 Kings 3:1-4.** Do you think this is a positive or negative portrayal of the new king? What factors point in each direction?
3. **Read 1 Kings 3:4-15.** God invites Solomon to ask for anything? What does Solomon's response reveal about:
 - a. The basis upon which he prays;
 - b. How Solomon sees God;
 - c. How Solomon sees himself;
 - d. How Solomon sees his job as King;
 - e. The true nature of wisdom and its connection with our heart, not just our mind
4. What does God's response to Solomon reveal about God's character, and the things He values in his people?
5. **Read Proverbs 1:1-7 and 9:10.** What do these verses add to our understanding about the true nature of wisdom?
6. What can we learn from Solomon's example, regarding our own priorities in prayer?
7. **Read 1 Kings 3:16-28.**
 - a. What impresses you about Solomon in these verses?
 - b. What point is the author making by including this anecdote here?
8. **Read Isaiah 11:1-4.** In this 'picture' of the coming Messiah – wisdom features prominently. Why is it so important for the leader of God's people to have wisdom?
9. **Read Matt 7:28-29.** These verses come at the end of Jesus' sermon on the mount (Matt 5-7). How does the response of the people to Jesus echo the response to Solomon in 1 Kings 3:28?
10. **Read Colossians 2:2-3.** All the 'treasures of wisdom and knowledge' are found in Christ. What are the implications of this for anyone who wants to be truly wise? How does this compare with a worldly definition of wisdom?
11. **Pray** for true wisdom, following the example of Solomon. And thank God for Jesus, who is the ultimate wise king, equipped by God to lead God's people!
12. **Pray** for our earthly leaders too, that God would give them true wisdom: expressed in humility, discernment between good and evil, and of course, trust in Jesus.

Study 3 | 1 Kings 4-5 | Solomon's Wealth

1. "Preparing well for a project, indicates value we place on the project." Discuss
2. **Read 1 Kings 4:1-19.** Following on from chapter 3, how do these verses also demonstrate Solomon's wisdom?
3. **Read 1 Kings 4:20-34.** What's the main vibe of this unit. What impression is the author trying to convey.
4. Read the following verses and consider how they re-emerge in 1 Kings 4:

Verse	How does 1 Kings 4 allude back to these verses?
Gen 12:1-3	
Gen 22:17	
Deut 8:7-10	
Deut 17:14-17	
1 Sam 8:10-18	

5. What's your evaluation of Solomon at this stage? Should we view him positively or negatively? Or both? How does Solomon's inconsistency remind us of ourselves?

*Now that Solomon and the Israelites are at their peak, it's time to build the temple. **Chapter 5** marks the first of three chapters describing the building of the temple, and two more celebrating it!*

6. **Read 1 Kings 4:34 and 5:1.** What is the connection between chapters 4 and 5?
7. **Read 1 Kings 5:2-5.** What drove Solomon's plans to build the temple?
8. **Read 1 Kings 5:6-18.** Why do you think such detail is included in this account of preparing materials for use in the temple?
9. What do you think is significant about non-Israelites contributing to the building of God's temple?
10. **Verse 12** is different to the rest. What's the point of including it here, in the middle of all the other details?
11. Across chapters 4 and 5 we see Solomon's wisdom find expression in administration, building works, international politics and natural sciences. How does this expand our understanding of wisdom? Is God's wisdom only concerned with 'spiritual' stuff, or other aspects of life too?
12. How do the circumstances and characters at this stage of Israel's history foreshadow God's everlasting Kingdom ruled by King Jesus?
13. Incredibly, despite the preparations and quality materials, this grand temple of Solomon didn't last! But King Jesus is building something greater, and more permanent. **Read Matthew 16:18. Praise God** that we can be part of something more important than Solomon's temple.

Study 4 | 1 Kings 6-7 | Solomon's Buildings

1. What is the biggest plan you've ever had personally? What led you to make your plan?
2. What was Solomon's big plan? What led him to make such a plan? Refresh your memory by **reading 1 Kings 5:2-5**.
3. **Read Deuteronomy 12:1-7**. What was God's purpose in placing a temple in Israel?
4. **Read 1 Kings 6**. This chapter is all about the building of the temple. What is your overall impression of the temple building project, as you follow the details in this chapter?
5. Consider the following elements of the description and what they teach us about God and his dwelling place. (You may wish to read **1 Kings 7** here as well. Chapter 7 describes some other important royal buildings being built, and the temple furnishings)
 - a. The time it took to build
 - b. The size of the temple
 - c. The beauty and glory of the temple artistry and its furnishings
 - d. The huge amount of gold used.
6. In modern Protestant churches we may be less inclined to worry about the grandeur of our buildings – and we rightly rejoice that our meeting with God isn't confined to certain religious places. However, perhaps we've become too casual towards God. How does the account of the temple building correct our casual approach to meeting with God?
7. **Read 1 Kings 6:11-13**. How do these verses convey the importance of the temple for God's relationship with his people? What is the essential function of the temple according to verse 13?
8. Later we see God's response to the temple being built take form. **Read 1 Kings 8:10-13**. Consider all that the Israelites knew of God – his creative majesty, his mighty power seen in the Exodus and the Conquest of the Land. His holiness conveyed at Mt Sinai, and in their laws. Describe what they may have felt at this momentous occasion?
9. The New Testament adds to our understanding of where and how God dwells amongst his people. How do the following verses identify God's current and/or future dwelling place?
 - a. John 1:10-18, 2:19-22
 - b. 1 Cor 3:16-17, 1 Peter 2:4-6
 - c. Rev 21:3-4, 21:22
10. If Solomon's temple was so elaborate, glorious and carefully constructed, what does this tell us about the precious nature of where God dwells now? How should this shape our approach to life, church, our future?
11. Can you boil your own attitude about meeting with God (privately or in church) down to one word? **Pray** for each other, that our attitude would reflect the glory of God seen first in Solomon's temple, and ultimately personified in Jesus!

Study 5 | 1 Kings 8-9 | Solomon's Lord

1. What's the biggest celebration you can remember? What were you celebrating?
2. Read **1 Kings 8**, in sections, and fill in the table below as you go. What do we learn about:

	God's character	God's unfolding plan
8:1-13		
8:14-21		
8:22-43		
8:44-53		
8:54-66		

3. What kinds of requests feature in Solomon's prayer? Do these things feature in your prayer life?
4. Where does Solomon understand God to dwell? Re-read Solomon's prayer closely (1 Kings 8:22-53) and look for the language repeated in verses 30, 32, 34, 36, 39, 43, 45 and 49.
5. **Read John 1:10-18.** How does this passage describe God's dwelling place? Consider also **John 2:19-22.**
6. **Read 1 Kings 9:1-9.** Solomon has now built the temple in fulfillment of God's promises to David (2 Sam 7). But is never-ending prosperity for Solomon and the Israelites guaranteed?
 - a. What are the conditions that will lead to blessing for Solomon and the Israelites?
 - b. What are the conditions that will lead to judgment for Solomon and the Israelites?
7. **Read Colossians 1:21-23.** What are the conditions that lead to the blessing of salvation for us? How is our situation before God different to that of Solomon and the Israelites? How is it similar?
8. Reflect on the similarities and differences between Solomon and his temple, on the one hand, and Jesus, on the other hand. How is Jesus a superior king to Solomon? How is Jesus a superior temple compared to Solomon's temple?
9. The mood of these chapters is one of celebration and worship. Is your response to Jesus, God's true king and temple, as jubilant as that of Solomon and the people in these chapters? Why or why not?
10. **Pray** and thank God that He has made his permanent dwelling amongst humanity, in Jesus!

Study 6 | 1 Kings 10 | Solomon's Fame

1. What people or places have you heard are so great, that you'd consider travelling a long way (with considerable cost and effort) to see them for yourself?



In 1 Kings 10, Solomon is visited by the Queen of Sheba. We can't be certain exactly where "Sheba" was, but many scholars think it was in the area of modern day Yemen. Little is known of this queen. Her fame stems from her appearance here in 1 Kings. In Matthew 12:42 Jesus refers to her as "the Queen of the South"

2. Read 1 Kings 10

- a. Why did the queen of Sheba travel so far, and with such an entourage, to visit Solomon?
 - b. What did she hear and see that exceeded her expectations and "took her breath away"?
 - c. What explanation does she give for the splendour of Solomon's kingdom? (See v 9)
 - d. What response does she make to God's king, and what blessing does she receive?
 - e. What else about Solomon's kingdom was impressive to the nations? (v 14-25). To what extent does this fulfil God's promise in 1 Kings 3:10-14?
3. The queen of Sheba's visit was a high point in the history of Israel – and gave concrete shape to the hopes of God's people (See Psalm 72:8-11 & 15 and Isaiah 60:1-6). How does this deepen our appreciation of the visit of the magi (or "wise men") to Jesus in Matthew 2:1-2 & 9-12?

4. Read Matthew 12:38-42.

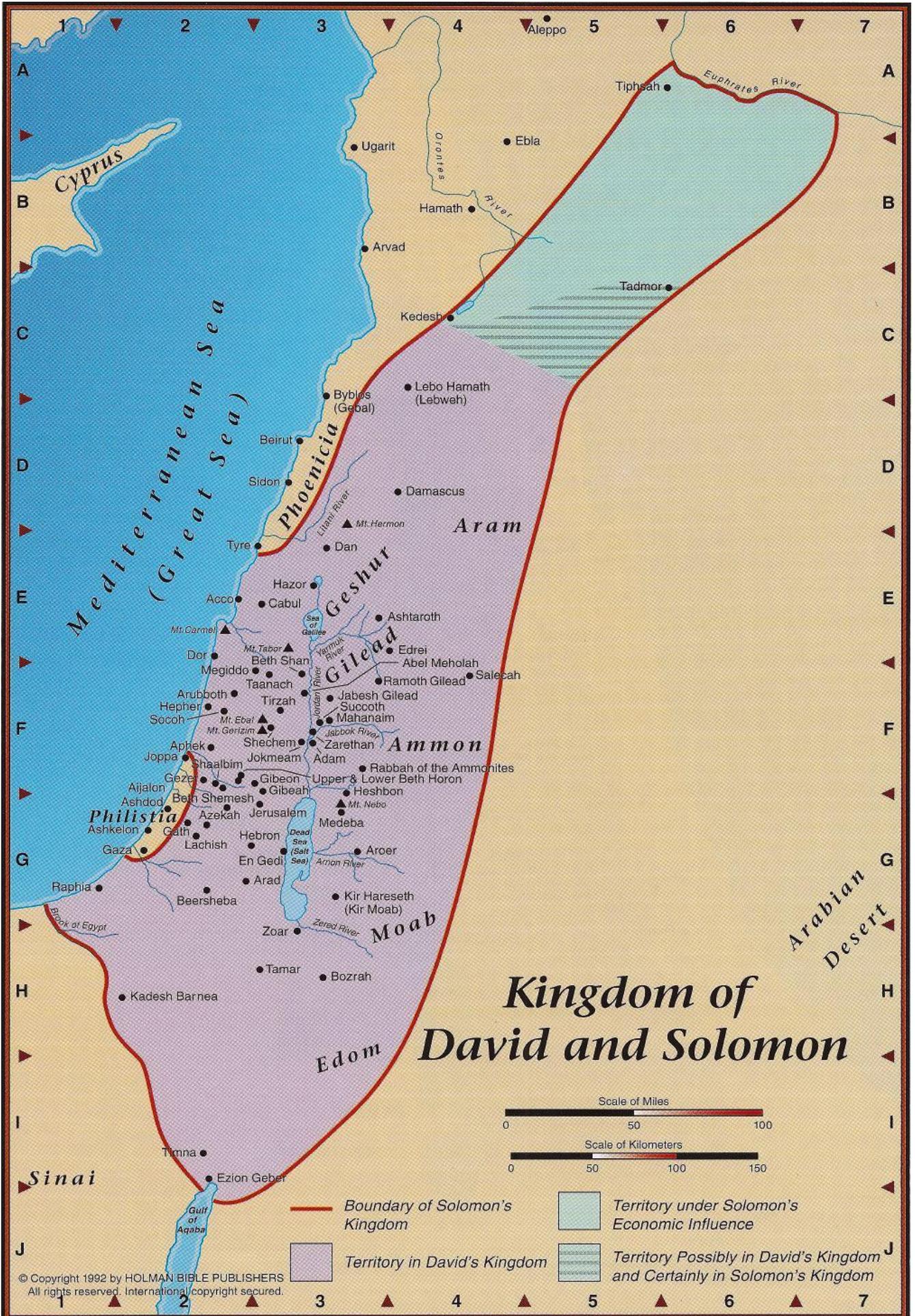
- f. In what way is the queen of Sheba an example for us?
 - g. In what ways is Jesus greater than Solomon? (Think deeply about this. If you need some help, read Colossians 1:15-20 & 2:1-10).
 - h. When has/does Jesus "take your breath away"? What difference do you think it would make to your life if this was a regular experience?
 - i. What might it look like for you to go to follow the queen's example to make great efforts to hear the wisdom of Jesus and see the splendour of his kingdom?
5. What can you **pray** about in response to what you've read and discussed?

Study 7 | 1 Kings 11 | Solomon's Fall

1. When you think of someone who is "successful", who comes to mind? What makes them "successful"?

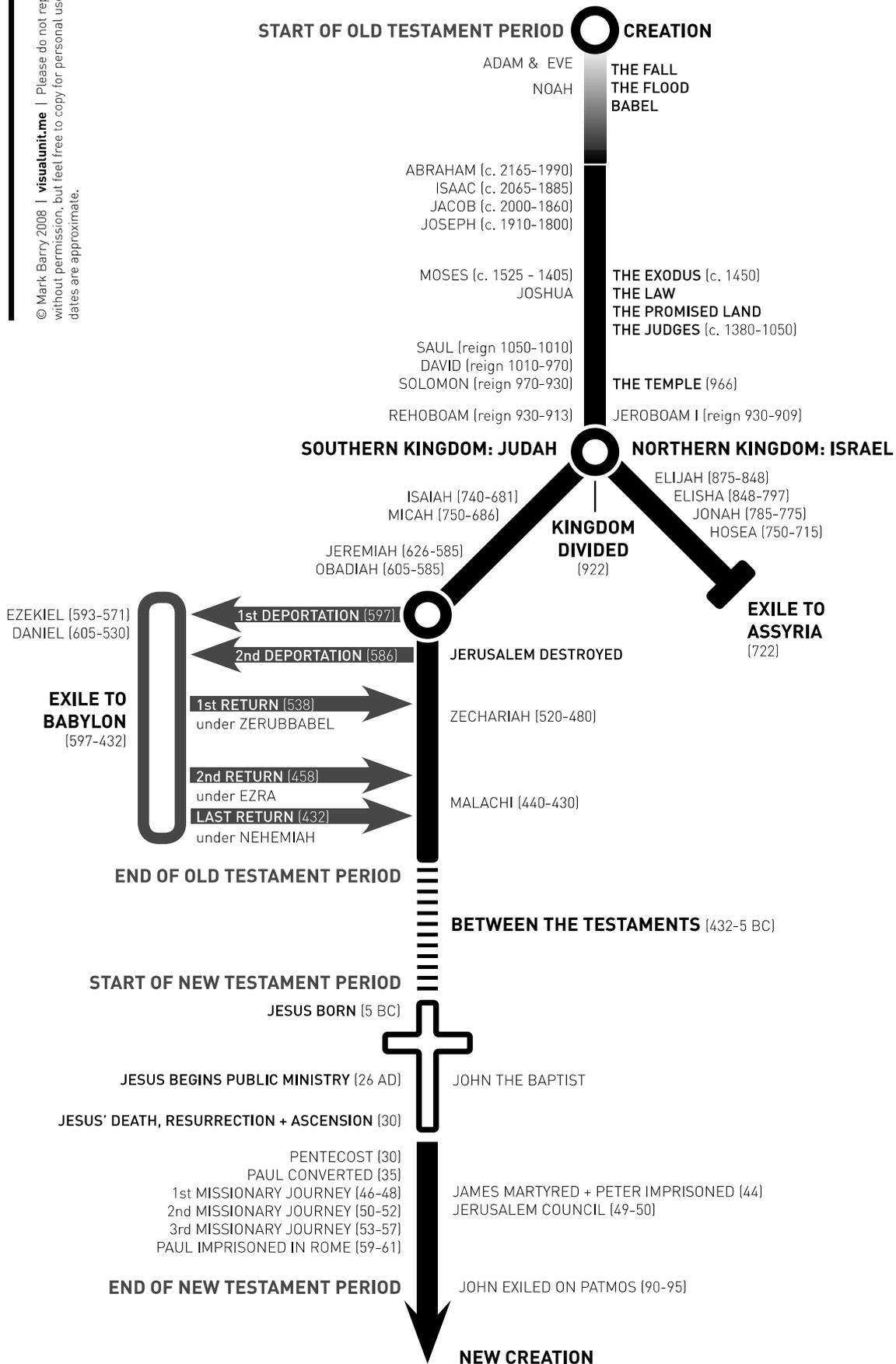
In his recent book (Faithful Leaders) Rico Tice writes: *Success is hearing "well done" from the only lips that matter. Failure is being successful at things that don't truly matter at all.*

2. Reflecting on all we've seen so far in this series...
 - j. What aspects of Solomon and his rule would/should rightly be described as successful?
 - k. Compare God's law in Deuteronomy 17:16-20 with 1 Kings 3:1-3 & 10:26-29. To what extent was Solomon successful in pleasing God?
3. **Read 1 Kings 11:1-8.** When Solomon was old, why did he turn away from the Lord and worship other Gods? What was the 'heart' of his problem?
4. According to God's warning to Solomon in 1 Kings 9:6-9, what should we now expect to happen?
5. **Read 1 Kings 11:9-43.**
 - l. What was God's verdict on Solomon? (v 9-10)
 - m. What consequences flow from Solomon's failure to faithfully love God? What do you think this might have meant for the 'ordinary' people of his kingdom?
 - n. In what ways does God's grace and faithfulness continue to be seen here?
 - o. God limits and delays his punishments "because of David" (v 12, 13, 34, 36) whom God says kept his law (v 34, 38). Yet David was also guilty of serious sin (2 Samuel 11). What did David do when he sinned that Solomon fails to do?
6. How does reading about Solomon's failure before God leave you feeling? How does it increase your appreciation for Jesus?
7. What might we learn from Solomon's life to help us faithfully trust and obey God right through our lives? (eg. What decisions could we make now that might later turn our hearts away from the Lord? What do we really love? Whom do we deep down want to please? What should we do when we sin?)
8. How would you sum up Solomon's life? What do you think is the main message of 1 Kings 1-11?
9. **Pray** together about what you have heard from God in this study, and through this series.



BIBLE TIMELINE

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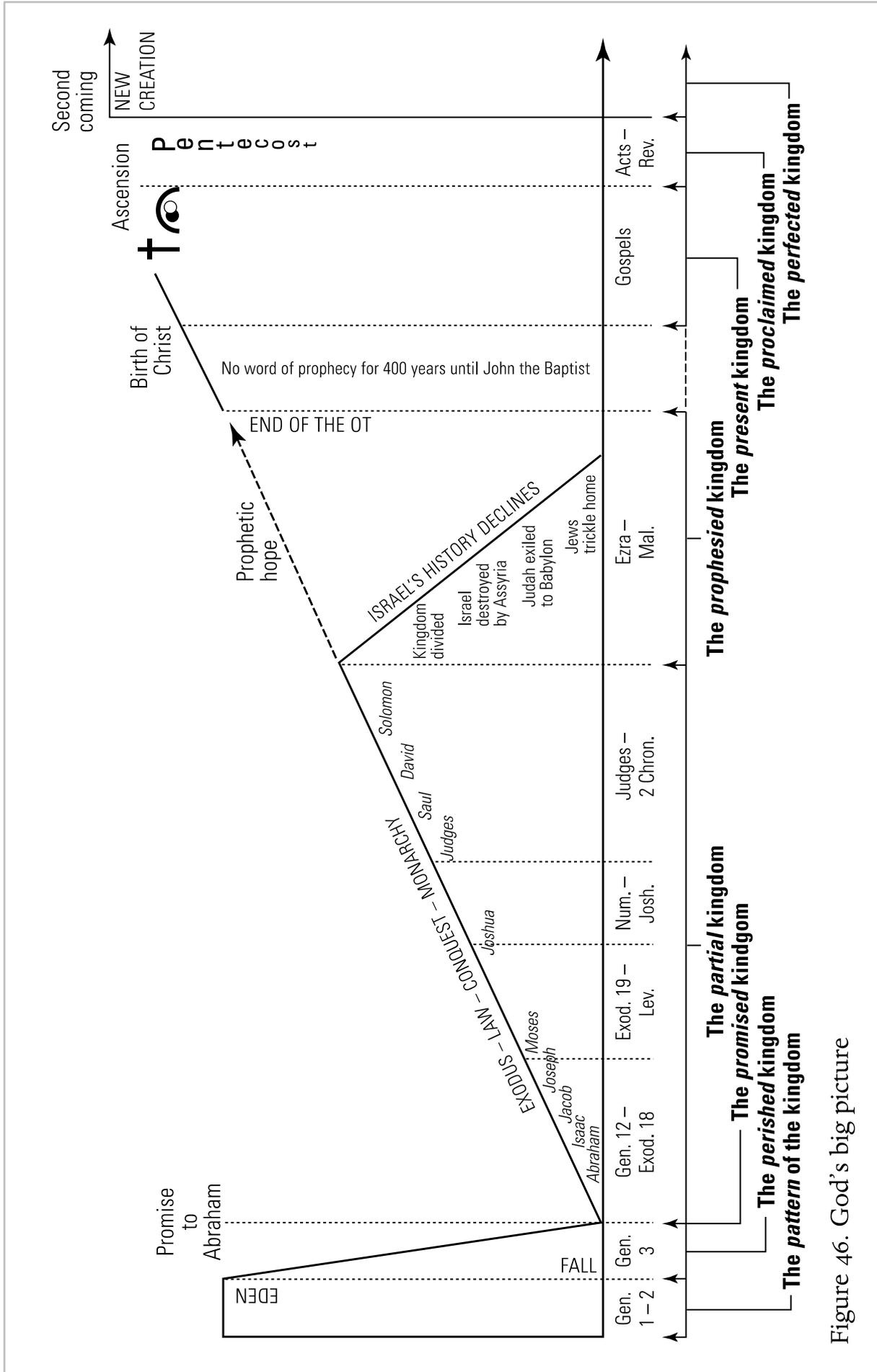
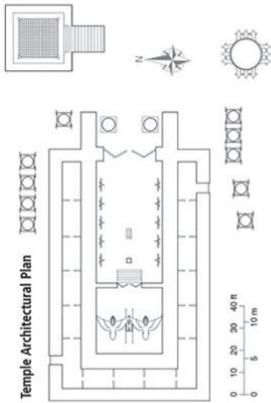
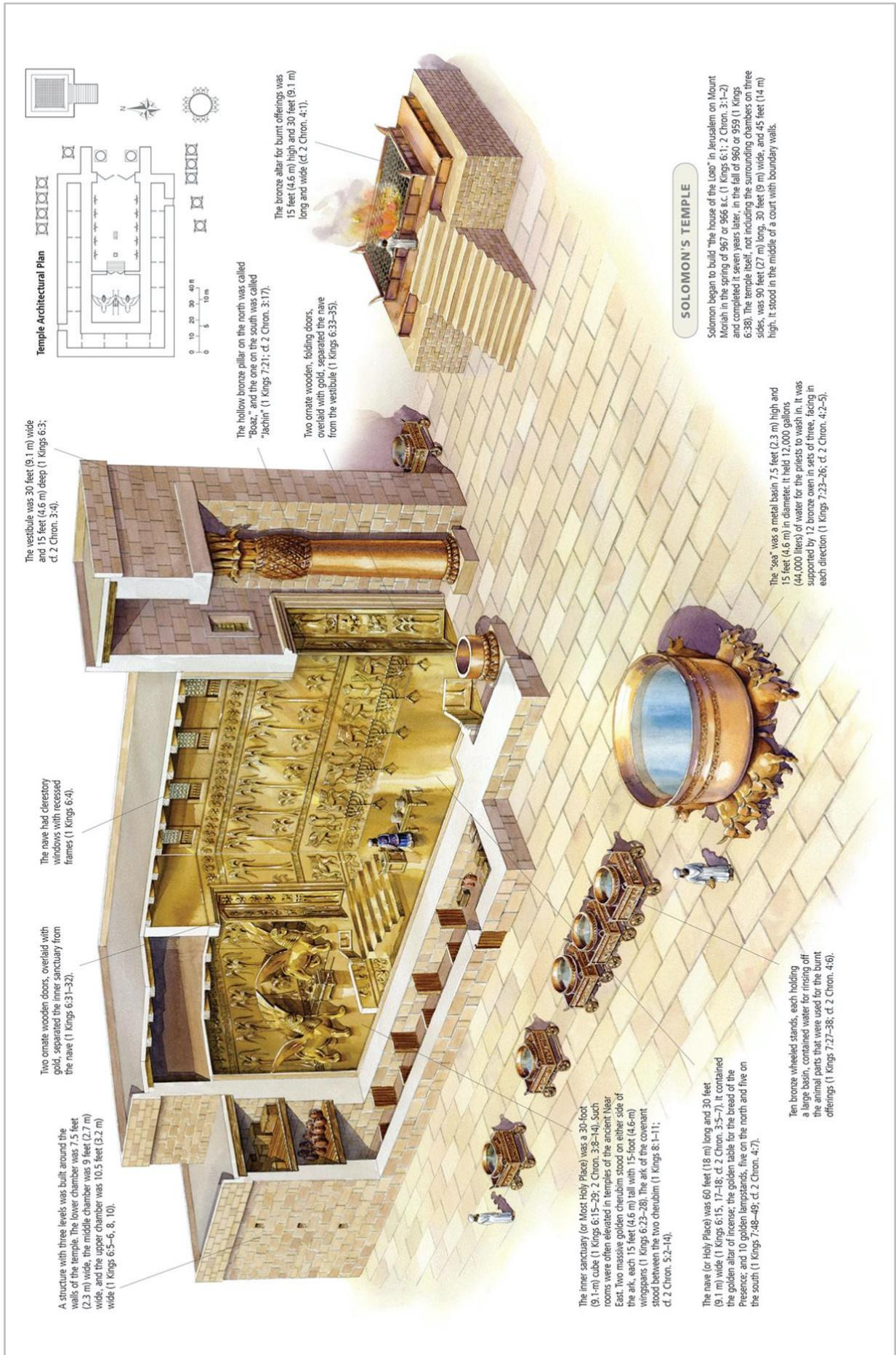


Figure 46. God's big picture



The vestibule was 30 feet (9.1 m) wide and 15 feet (4.6 m) deep (1 Kings 6:3; cf. 2 Chron. 3:4).

The nave had clerestory windows with recessed frames (1 Kings 6:4).

Two ornate wooden doors, overlaid with gold, separated the inner sanctuary from the nave (1 Kings 6:31–32).

A structure with three levels was built around the walls of the temple. The lower chamber was 7.5 feet (2.3 m) wide, the middle chamber was 9 feet (2.7 m) wide, and the upper chamber was 10.5 feet (3.2 m) wide (1 Kings 6:5–6, 8, 10).

The hollow bronze pillar on the north was called “Boaz,” and the one on the south was called “Jachin” (1 Kings 7:21; cf. 2 Chron. 3:17).

Two ornate wooden, folding doors, overlaid with gold, separated the nave from the vestibule (1 Kings 6:33–35).

The bronze altar for burnt offerings was 15 feet (4.6 m) high and 30 feet (9.1 m) long and wide (cf. 2 Chron. 4:1).

The inner sanctuary (or Most Holy Place) was a 30-foot (9.1-m) cube (1 Kings 6:15–20; 2 Chron. 3:8–14). Such rooms were often elevated in temples of the ancient Near East. Two massive golden cherubim stood on either side of the ark, each 15 feet (4.6 m) tall with 15-foot (4.6-m) wingspans (1 Kings 6:23–26). The ark of the covenant stood between the two cherubim (1 Kings 6:1–11; cf. 2 Chron. 5:2–14).

The nave (or Holy Place) was 60 feet (18 m) long and 30 feet (9.1 m) wide (1 Kings 6:15, 17–18; cf. 2 Chron. 3:5–7). It contained the golden altar of incense; the golden table for the bread of the Presence; and 10 golden lampstands, five on the north and five on the south (1 Kings 7:48–49; cf. 2 Chron. 4:7).

Ten bronze wheeled stands, each holding a large basin, contained water for rinsing off the animal parts that were used for the burnt offerings (1 Kings 7:27–38; cf. 2 Chron. 4:6).

The “sea” was a metal basin 7.5 feet (2.3 m) high and 15 feet (4.6 m) in diameter. It held 12,000 gallons (44,000 liters) of water for the priests to wash in. It was supported by 12 bronze oxen in sets of three, facing in each direction (1 Kings 7:23–26; cf. 2 Chron. 4:2–5).

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

Solomon began to build “the house of the Lord” in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah in the spring of 967 or 966 B.C. (1 Kings 6:1; 2 Chron. 3:1–2) and completed it seven years later, in the fall of 960 or 959 (1 Kings 6:38). The temple itself, not including the surrounding chambers on three sides, was 90 feet (27 m) long, 30 feet (9 m) wide, and 45 feet (14 m) high. It stood in the middle of a court with boundary walls.

Selected glossary of characters and terms in 1 Kings

Abiathar – the priest. If Joab gave Adonijah power, Abiathar would have brought religious legitimacy. He was the last descendant of Eli (1 Samuel 2, 1 Kings 2:26-27), and the only survivor of a massacre of priests in 1 Samuel 22:18-23. He had served David faithfully and played an important role in saving David from Absalom's attempted coup.

Adonijah – David's oldest surviving son. Probably about 35 years old. He has not appeared since his birth notice in 2 Samuel 3:4. He was presumably among the king's sons who witnessed Amnon's murder, fled in fear and wept with their father at the tragedy - 2 Samuel 13:23-36. Although we might expect that the oldest son would inherit the throne, we can note God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 referred to a son to be born in the future.

Benaiah. A military commander alongside Joab – 2 Samuel 8:18 & 20:23. He commanded the "Cherethites and Pelethites", was one of David's "mighty men" and in charge of his personal bodyguard – 2 Samuel 23:20-23.

Bushel. A measurement of capacity for dry goods, roughly equivalent to 22 litres

David's sons (and their mothers) that we know of from (2 Sam 3:2-5):

1. Amnon (Ahinoam) – Raped his sister, then killed by Absalom
2. Chileab (Abigail) – never heard of again – probably died in childhood
3. Absalom (Maachar) – rebelled and killed by Joab
4. Adonijah (Haggith) – We meet him in 1 Kings 1.
5. Shephatiah (Abitai) – Never heard of again.
6. Ithream (Eglah) – never heard of again.
7. Later Bathsheba bore at least 2 sons
 - a. One who died in infancy - 2 Samuel 12:14-23
 - b. Solomon - 2 Samuel 12:24-25

High place: An elevated site, usually found on the top of a mountain or hill used for sacred activity. Most high places were Canaanite places of pagan worship.

Horns of the altar: The edge or corner of the altar. Due to the association with sacred activity, grabbing hold of the altar signified a fugitive claiming a right of sanctuary or protection from punishment

Joab - A powerful military commander (2 Samuel 8:16 & 3:39). David's nephew, the son of Zeruiah. On one hand he had been fiercely loyal to David, but he also took matters into his own hands. He upset David by killing Abner (Saul's military commander with whom David wanted to make peace). He also killed Absalom (David's son who had rebelled) in direct disobedience to David's orders (2 Samuel 18:5 & 14). He was a violent man, who also killed Amasa – another military commander appointed by David – 2 Samuel 20:7-10. David didn't have the courage or strength to deal with him during his lifetime, but instructs Solomon to finally bring justice to Joab – see 1 Kings 2:5-6.

Nathan the Prophet. He previously played a crucial role at 3 points in David's life. He conveyed God's promise in 2 Samuel 7. He rebuked David after his adultery with Bathsheba and arranged

killing of her husband (2 Samuel 12). Then when Solomon was born he brought word that this boy was “loved by the Lord” (2 Samuel 12:23-24).

Shimei, Rei and David’s warriors. This Shimei is probably not the same person as Shimei son of Gera (who featured in 2 Samuel and in 1 Kings 2:8-9 & 36-46). Perhaps he is the Shimei mentioned in 4:18? We don’t know anything else about him, or about Rei. David’s warriors or “mighty men” were heroes of battle who are celebrated in 2 Samuel 23.

Zadok - the Priest. Came to prominence (alongside Abiathar) after David moved his base to Jerusalem – 2 Samuel 8:17. In hindsight we can see that the prophecy of 1 Samuel 2:35 referred to Zadok – the house of Zadok was to replace the house of Eli (ie. Abiathar).