

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 1 KINGS 5

1 KINGS 5:1-6 - TEMPLE PREPARATIONS BEGIN. SOLOMON CONTACTS HIRAM, KING OF TYRE

TYRE, ISRAEL'S NEIGHBOR TO THE NORTHWEST, HAD A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL, DATING BACK TO DAVID'S ASCENT TO THE THRONE. 2 SAMUEL 5:11 TELLS US:

"THEN HIRAM KING OF TYRE SENT MESSENGERS TO DAVID WITH CEDAR TREES AND CARPENTERS AND STONEMASONS; AND THEY BUILT A HOUSE FOR DAVID."

THE ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTES THE FOLLOWING IN LIGHT OF THESE TWO EVENTS:

"HIRAM KING OF TYRE IS MENTIONED IN 1 KINGS 5:1-18 AS A FRIEND OF SOLOMON WHO PROVIDES THE CEDARS TO BUILD THE TEMPLE, JUST AS HERE HE PROVIDES DAVID WITH CEDARS TO BUILD HIS HOUSE. TYRE WAS A TRADING EMPIRE, AND IT WAS IN ITS INTEREST TO KEEP THE INLAND TRADE ROUTES, ESPECIALLY THOSE THROUGH ISRAEL TO EGYPT, OPEN TO ITS MERCHANTS. ACCORDING TO JOSEPHUS, HOWEVER, HIRAM DID NOT BEGIN TO REIGN UNTIL NEAR THE END OF DAVID'S OWN REIGN. IF THAT IS CORRECT, EITHER THIS CONSTRUCTION SHOULD BE DATED TOWARD THE END OF DAVID'S REIGN OR THE HIRAM IN 1 KINGS IS THE SUCCESSOR (PROBABLY SON) OF THE HIRAM HERE, WHO CONTINUED HIS FATHER'S GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH DAVID. THE CEDARS OF LEBANON (WHICH HAVE NOW ALL BUT DISAPPEARED) WERE FAMOUS THROUGHOUT THE NEAR EAST... (ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTE ON 2 SAM 5:11)



V. 6 - CEDARS OF LEBANON: "IN THE BIBLICAL WORLD, LEBANESE CEDAR (CEDRUS LIBANI) TREES WERE HIGHLY SOUGHT AFTER AS AN EXCELLENT SOURCE OF TIMBER FOR ANCIENT WOODWORKING. THE WOOD'S HIGH QUALITY, PLEASANT SCENT AND RESISTANCE TO BOTH ROT AND INSECTS MADE IT A POPULAR BUILDING MATERIAL FOR TEMPLES, PALACES AND SEAGOING VESSELS, FROM SOLOMON'S FAMED TEMPLE TO THE SO-CALLED "JESUS BOAT" OF THE FIRST CENTURY (AD). TODAY, LEBANESE CEDAR TREES GROW MOSTLY IN LEBANON AND SOUTHERN TURKEY, WITH A FEW FOUND IN CYPRUS AND SYRIA. AS THE BIBLE MAKES CLEAR, THE VALUABLE WOOD HAD TO BE IMPORTED INTO ANCIENT ISRAEL." ("LEBANESE CEDAR—THE PRIZED TREE OF ANCIENT WOODWORKING", BIBLICAL ARCHEOLOGY REVIEW, AUG, 2, 2015, VIA BIBLICALARCHEOLOGY.ORG/DAILY/BIBLICAL-ARTIFACTS/ARTIFACTS-AND-THE-BIBLE/LEBANESE-CEDAR%E2%80%94THE-PRIZED-TREE-OF-ANCIENT-WOODWORKING/)

THESE CEDARS WERE USED BY THE GREAT ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS AND AS A RESULT BROUGHT GREAT WEALTH TO THIS REGION. THE TREES WERE ALSO SYMBOLS OF STRENGTH AND POWER BECAUSE OF THEIR SIZE.

PSALM 29:4-5 - THE VOICE OF THE LORD IS POWERFUL, THE VOICE OF THE LORD IS MAJESTIC. THE VOICE OF THE LORD BREAKS THE CEDARS; YES, THE LORD BREAKS IN PIECES THE CEDARS OF LEBANON.

2 CHRONICLES 2:1-10 - MORE DETAILS OF SOLOMON'S REQUEST/LETTER

V. 5-6 - CLEARLY SOLOMON'S HEART IS TO BUILD SOMETHING GRAND - FOR GOD - NOT FOR HIMSELF.

1 KINGS 5:7-9 - HIRAM'S REPLY

2 CHRONICLES 2:11-16 - MORE DETAILS OF HIRAM'S (HIRAM'S) REPLY

V. 12 - HIRAM REJOICES IN THE RULE OF SOLOMON AND PRAISES THE LORD!



THIS IS AN IMAGE FROM THE LOUVRE MUSEUM FOUND IN ANCIENT ASSYRIA. IT IS CALLED THE "FRIEZE OF THE TRANSPORTATION OF TIMBER". IT DATES BACK TO 713-706 B.C. IT DEPICTS WHEN THE CEDARS OF LEBANON WERE PURCHASED AND TRANSPORTED TO ASSYRIA VIA BOATS/RAFTS JUST LIKE WHAT IS MENTIONED IN 1 KINGS 5. ONCE THE RAFTS ARRIVED AT THE COAST, THEY WOULD BE TRANSPORTED ON LAND. BUT THIS METHOD WOULD CUT DOWN SIGNIFICANTLY ON THE TIME AND DIFFICULTY IN MOVING THESE GREAT TREES. (PHOTO SOURCE: WWW.LOUVRE.FR/EN/OEUVRE-NOTICES/FRIEZE-TRANSPORTATION-TIMBER)

V. 9 - HIRAM AGREED AND ASKED FOR FOOD SUPPLIES FOR THE ROYAL HOUSEHOLD TO BE GIVEN AS PAYMENT FOR THE TREES.

1 KINGS 5:10-12 - TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL & TYRE

1 KINGS 5:11 (NLT) - IN RETURN, SOLOMON SENT HIM AN ANNUAL PAYMENT OF 100,000 BUSHELS OF WHEAT FOR HIS HOUSEHOLD AND 110,000 GALLONS OF PURE OLIVE OIL.

THE KING OF ISRAEL & THE KINGS OF THE EARTH...

FROM DALE RALPH DAVIS' COMMENTARY ON 1 KINGS: "IS HIRAM MORE THAN (JUST) A TIMBER SUPPLIER? LET'S GO BACK MOMENTARILY TO 4:34 AND, IGNORING THE CHAPTER DIVISION, READ STRAIGHT ON TO 5:1...

1 KINGS 4:34-5:1A - MEN CAME FROM ALL PEOPLES TO HEAR THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON, FROM ALL THE KINGS OF THE EARTH WHO HAD HEARD OF HIS WISDOM. 5:1 NOW HIRAM KING OF TYRE SENT HIS SERVANTS TO SOLOMON, WHEN HE HEARD THAT THEY HAD ANOINTED HIM KING...

"HIRAM IS ONE OF THE 'KINGS OF THE EARTH' AND AS SUCH HE (SPEAKS WELL OF) YAHWEH FOR GIVING SUCH A WISE SON TO DAVID TO RULE SUCH A VAST PEOPLE (V. 7). SURELY THE BIBLICAL WRITER REGARDS THIS PRAISE (WHETHER FORMAL, SINCERE, OR BOTH) IN THE MOUTH OF A PAGAN KING AS WORTHY OF NOTE. K.C. W. F. BAHR THINGS EVEN HIRAM'S AIR IN TEMPLE MATERIALS IS DEEPLY SIGNIFICANT:

"...SO THAT EVEN HEATHEN NATIONS, WHETHER FRIENDLY OR CONQUERED, TOOK PART IN THE BUILDING OF THE HOUSE FOR THE GOD OF ISRAEL, AND SO CONTRIBUTED INDIRECTLY TO THE GLORIFYING OF GOD. IT WAS A SETTING FORTH IN ACT OF THE WORD: "THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S, AND ALL THAT THEREIN IS (PSALM 24:1): 'FOR THE KINGDOM IS THE LORD'S, AND HE IS GOVERNOR AMONG THE NATIONS (PSALM 22:28), AND 'ALL THE HEATHEN SHALL SERVE HIM (PSALM 72:11).

WE ARE NOT CLAIMING HIRAM IS A BLATANT PROPHECY OF YAHWEH'S UNIVERSAL KINGDOM, BUT A SUBTLE ANTICIPATION OF IT. SOMETIMES WE ARE GIVEN GLIMPSES OF THINGS TO COME." ("FOCUS ON THE BIBLE: 1 KINGS", PG 54-55).

1 KINGS 5:13-18 - SOLOMON'S WORK FORCE

THE GROUP WORKING ON THE TREES AND LUMBER WERE 30,000 MEN (V. 13) SENT IN GROUPS OF 10,000. EACH OF THESE THREE GROUPS WOULD WORK IN LEBANON FOR 1 MONTH AND AT HOME FOR 2 (V. 14). ADDITIONALLY THERE WERE 70,000 COMMON LABORERS (NASB "TRANSPORTERS") AND 80,000 STONECUTTERS WORKING IN THE MOUNTAIN QUARRIES (V. 15). AND THERE WERE 3,300 MEN WHO WERE OVERSEEING THE DIFFERENT AREAS OF WORK, SIMILAR TO A FOREMAN (V. 16). IN ALL, JUST INCLUDING THESE WORKERS LISTED, WE ARE TALKING ABOUT A WORKFORCE OF 183,300 MEN (NOT INCLUDING HIRAM'S MEN [V. 18]).

BEFORE WE THINK THAT SOLOMON IS ACTING MORE LIKE A PAGAN KING OR PHARAOH, FORCIBLY DRAFTING HIS OWN CITIZENS INTO HARD LABOR FOR HIS SELF-GLORIFYING BUILDING PROJECTS...LET'S PAUSE AND TAKE A BREATH. FIRST, SOLOMON DOES HAVE QUITE THE LABOR FORCE FOR THIS PROJECT - BUT NOTICE THAT THOSE WHO ARE WORKING AFAR DO SO FOR 1 MONTH AWAY FROM HOME, AND 2 MONTHS SLEEPING IN THEIR OWN BEDS. WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT RIPPING AWAY MEN AND RIPPING APART FAMILIES.

SECONDLY, IT IS LIKELY THAT A GOOD PART OF THESE NUMBERS (IF NOT ALL OF THEM) WERE ACTUALLY NOT MEN OF ISRAEL. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

1 KINGS 9:20-22 (ESV) - ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WERE LEFT OF THE AMORITES, THE HITTITES, THE PERIZZITES, THE HIVITES, AND THE JEBUSITES, WHO WERE NOT OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL- 21 THEIR DESCENDANTS WHO WERE LEFT AFTER THEM IN THE LAND, WHOM THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WERE UNABLE TO DEVOTE TO DESTRUCTION- THESE SOLOMON DRAFTED TO BE SLAVES, AND SO THEY ARE TO THIS DAY. 22 BUT OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL SOLOMON MADE NO SLAVES. THEY WERE THE SOLDIERS, THEY WERE HIS OFFICIALS, HIS COMMANDERS, HIS CAPTAINS, HIS CHARIOT COMMANDERS AND HIS HORSEMEN.

LASTLY, (ESPECIALLY IF SOME OF THEM WERE SOLOMON'S OWN COUNTRYMEN), THESE WORKERS ARE NOT BUILDING A NEW STADIUM FOR SOLOMON, SHRINES IN HIS HONOR ON EVERY MOUNTAIN OR STATUES OF HIS LIKENESS IN FAR AWAY LANDS (LIKE THE PHARAOS AND CAESARS DID). THEY ARE HELPING TO BUILD THE HOLY TEMPLE OF GOD. WHEN YOU ARE DOING WORK OF ANY KIND FOR GOD AND THE FURTHERANCE OF HIS WORSHIP, YOU ARE SERVING HIM AND YOUR SERVICE, IF DONE WITH THE RIGHT HEART, IS WORSHIP. THE PRAISE LEADER AND PASTOR'S ROLE IN THE CHURCH IS AS MUCH SERVICE TO GOD AS THE CLEANING CREW, SETUP TEAM, AND MAINTENENCE GUY. REMEMBER PAUL'S WORDS:

1 CORINTHIANS 12:22-25 - ON THE CONTRARY, IT IS MUCH TRUER THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY WHICH SEEM TO BE WEAKER ARE NECESSARY; 23 AND THOSE MEMBERS OF THE BODY WHICH WE DEEM LESS HONORABLE, ON THESE WE BESTOW MORE ABUNDANT HONOR, AND OUR LESS PRESENTABLE MEMBERS BECOME MUCH MORE PRESENTABLE, 24 WHEREAS OUR MORE PRESENTABLE MEMBERS HAVE NO NEED OF IT. BUT GOD HAS SO COMPOSED THE BODY, GIVING MORE ABUNDANT HONOR TO THAT MEMBER WHICH LACKED, 25 SO THAT THERE MAY BE NO DIVISION IN THE BODY, BUT THAT THE MEMBERS MAY HAVE THE SAME CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

LOOKING AHEAD...1 KINGS 6:1