

## 1 Kings 5:1-18

### Hiram king of Tyre Helps Solomon Build the Temple

(In the Jewish Bible this chapter is combined with the previous chapter).

A new character is now introduced to us - Hiram.

**1 Kings 5:1** - "And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David."

Hiram (c. 969–936 BC) was the Phoenician king of Tyre. The Phoenicians were cousins of the Canaanites, who lived along the coast north of Israel centered on the cities of Byblos, Beirut, Tyre and Sidon. Probably many Canaanites who fled from Israel's invasion ended up in Phoenicia. They were renowned as traders and mariners, and planted colonies all over the Mediterranean. Carthage, Rome's early rival, was the last expression of Phoenician culture. The famous cedars of Lebanon made them a source of lumber for Egypt and elsewhere.

Hiram was "a lover of David" and was considered his ally, as well as an ally to Solomon. He was probably originally a worshipper of Baal or Melqart. He benefitted from the alliance with Israel by gaining access through Israel to the Red Sea and trade to the Persian Gulf possibly as far as India. And Solomon also gave him large quantities of grain and olive oil in return for his help.

After Hiram hears Solomon's request to help build the Temple he speaks as if he is a believer in Yahweh.

**1 Kings 5:7** - "And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people."

Hiram may have been converted to faith in Yahweh by David, judging by his statement to Solomon, expanded in 1 Chronicles: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who has given King David a wise son, endowed with discretion and understanding, who will build a temple for the Lord" (**2 Chronicles 2:11**).

### The Alliance between Hiram and Solomon

**1 Kings 5:12** - "And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together."

Tradition even has it that King Hiram gave his daughter in marriage to Solomon. Solomon also appears to have entered into an alliance with Pharaoh (**1 Kings 10:28-29**) by marrying Pharaoh's daughter.

Israel was forbidden to make defensive alliances with the Canaanite tribes (**Exodus 23:32; Deuteronomy 7:2, Leviticus 18:3-4 ; Leviticus 20:22-23**). And they were forbidden by the prophets from seeking help from Egypt:

- **Isaiah 31:1** - "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD."

But in this slice of history the usual powers in the region - in Mesopotamia and in Egypt - were relatively weak, and Solomon's kingdom was strong. So Solomon was not exactly put in a position of dependency on Tyre and Egypt.

But Israel were also to be a "light to the Gentiles" by keeping the Torah law:

- **Deuteronomy 4:6** - "Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"

- **Isaiah 60:3** - "And unto your light, nations shall walk, and kings unto the brightness of your rising."

- **Psalms 2:7, 10** - "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee....Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth." **Hebrews 1:1-7** equates the Son with Jesus the Messiah.

"be instructed" - Solomon's interaction with kings like Hiram and Pharaoh is ultimately to enlighten or "instruct" them about the one true God.

And this alliance with Hiram was no light matter. Later, the prophet Amos says that destruction would come upon Tyre for breaking this alliance with Israel:

- **Amos 1:9-10** - "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant: But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof."

(Fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar after a 13-year siege, according to Josephus (Antiqu. I. 9. c. 14. sect. 2.).

### Testing Solomon's Wisdom - Riddle Me This...

Besides the aid in building the Temple, Solomon and Hiram, according to tradition, exchanged riddles backed up by costly wagers.

The Talmud and the apocryphal book of the Maccabees states Solomon's wisdom was greater than everyone, including Moses, which fulfills another Messianic prophecy (Deuteronomy 18:15). Jesus is "greater than Solomon," and a prophet like Moses.

Josephus, "Antiquities of the Jews": "Moreover, the king of Tyre sent sophisms and enigmatical sayings to Solomon, and desired he would solve them, and free them from the ambiguity that was in them. Now so sagacious and understanding was Solomon, that none of these problems were too hard for him; but he conquered them all by his reasonings, and discovered their hidden meaning, and brought it to light. (8.5.3)"

Elsewhere, in his shorter work "Against Apion," Josephus wrote:

"[T]here was another passion, a philosophic inclination of theirs, which cemented the friendship that was betwixt them [Hiram and Solomon]; for they sent mutual problems to one another, with a desire to have them unriddled by each other; wherein Solomon was superior to Hiram, as he was wiser than he in other respects: and many of the epistles that passed between them are still preserved among the Tyrians" (1.17).

Josephus then cited a rather remarkable quote from the otherwise unknown, now lost writings of Dios, which according to Josephus were titled "The Histories of the Phoenicians."

Dios wrote: "They say further, that Solomon, when he was king of Jerusalem, sent problems to Hiram to be solved, and desired he would send others back for him to solve, and that he who could not solve the problems proposed to him should pay money to him that solved them. And when Hiram had agreed to the proposals, but was not able to solve the problems, he was obliged to pay a great deal of money, as a penalty for the same. As also they relate, that one Abdemon, a man of Tyre, did solve the problems, and propose others which Solomon could not solve, upon which he was obliged to repay a great deal of money to Hiram. (ibid)

This probably explains this passage:

- **1 Kings 9:11-14** - "[N]ow Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar-trees, and with gold, according to all his desire, that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him: and they pleased him not. And he said: 'What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother?' And they were called the land of Cabul ["displeasing"], unto this day. And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold."

These were both probably pay-offs from their wagers.

[See <https://armstronginstitute.org/728-riddle-me-this-why-did-king-hiram-pay-solomon-for-cities-he-didnt-want>]

Perhaps Solomon sharpened his wisdom by matching wits with Hiram. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." (**Proverbs 27:17**)

## 'Gentiles Shall Come to Thy Light'

The story of the Gentile king Hiram helping Solomon build the Temple is another fulfillment of passages in the Psalms and the prophets:

- **Isaiah 60:1-6** - "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall shew forth the praises of the LORD."

Sheba is mentioned - Another reference to the queen of Sheba visiting Solomon that we saw earlier.

- **Psalms 72:10-11** - "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him."

The psalm is "a Psalm for Solomon." But the Targum replaces Solomon with the Messiah. The whole psalm, the Midrash says, is "praise to the Messiah-King."

And all these promises point to Jesus:

- **2 Corinthians 1:20** - "For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him, Amen, to the glory of God through us."

- **Isaiah 60:10,16** - "And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favor have I had mercy on thee...'

- **Revelation 21:24** - "By its light the nations will walk, and into it the kings of the earth will bring their glory."

## 'Spoiling the Egyptians'

This idea of God inducing Gentile kings to aid his people begins back with the patriarchs.

- King Abimelech of Gerar unwittingly took Sarah, and as restitution awarded Abraham free grazing rights to whatever land he wanted (**Genesis 20:1-16**).
- Joseph rises to a powerful position in Egypt where God arranges that he is able to aid his family during a famine.
- Daniel similarly rises to authority in Babylon.
- We saw how David took the plunder from his military victories and reserved it for the Temple.
- Cyrus king of Persia decreed he would aid the Jews in rebuilding their Temple after the exile:

- **Ezra 1:1-4** - "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying: 'Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD, the God of heaven, given me; and He hath charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all His people--his God be with him--let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD, the God of Israel, He is the God who is in Jerusalem. And whosoever is left, in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill-offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.'"

And further, the Temple utensils looted and defiled would be returned to their rightful place:

- **Ezra 6:3-5** - "In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king made a decree: Concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, let the house be builded, the place where they offer sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; with three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber, and let the expenses be given out of the king's house; and also let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought back unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to its place, and thou shalt put them in the house of God."

[I saw the actual cylinder seal of Cyrus on display in Washington, D.C., in 2013, on loan from The British Museum. It states his general policy of allowing deportees to return and to re-establish religious sites, which was the policy that Ezra and the Jews appealed to.]

- King Ahasuerus offers Esther "up to half the kingdom."
- At the Exodus, the Egyptians give the fleeing Israelites valuables that later are used in making objects for the Tabernacle.

- **Exodus 12:35-36** - "Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered/"spoiled" the Egyptians."

Irenaeus of Lyons and other early church fathers believed the Israelites symbolize the Church, and the gold, silver and clothes of the Egyptians represent the world's culture. Thus it is God's command to the Church to plunder culture for their use. It is later stated in Exodus that the gold and silver of the Egyptians was used as the materials used to create the holy objects of the Tabernacle: the gold cups, gold show bread plates, the gold candlesticks, and even the ark of the covenant.

Thus, the church fathers reasoned, the Church is to penetrate culture, take its best resources, melt them down, refine them, and utilize them for the benefit of Church and the glory of God.

Irenaeus, "Against Heresies": "'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that they, when you shall be put to flight, may receive you into eternal tabernacles' (Luke 16:9). For whatsoever we acquired from unrighteousness when we were heathen, we are proved righteous when we have become believers by applying it to the Lord's advantage."

Even philosophy? "Whatever things were rightly said among all men are the property of us Christians" ("Second Apology" of Justin Martyr, 13:4).

### **Strangers Drawn to Israel**

Solomon raised work crews to quarry stones and transport the materials for the Temple.

**1 Kings 5:15** - "And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;"

Rashi - These men "were all [Gentile] proselytes who were drawn and attracted to the Jewish people, that converted because of Solomon's greatness and hospitality. And it is likewise written in **2 Chronicles 2:16** "And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel... and they were found a hundred and fifty thousand."

[Presumably these were different from those unconverted Canaanites described in **1 Kings 9:20-21** - "And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel, 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."]

**1 Kings 5:17** - "And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house."

See also **1 Kings 6:7** - "And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building."

Rashi - Hewn stone: They were carved and chiseled [precisely to the required measurement] Although no tool of iron was heard in the house, while it was in building, but he would chisel the stones while still on the outside, and then bring them in and build from the inside. Thus is this explained in the Tractate Sota (48b).

**1 Kings 5:16** - "And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonemasons: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house."

This scene depicts the future building up of the church by a mixed group of Gentile and Jewish believers, people from every nation. We are the group of "strangers" who have been attracted to Israel by Solomon's (rather, the Messiah's) "greatness and hospitality (or grace)." And we build spiritually, with "neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron" - or *self-exertion* of any kind.

- **1 Corinthians 3:9-11,16** - "For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ...Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

- **Ephesians 2:19-22** - "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

- **1 Peter 2:4-5** - "As you come to Him, the living stone, rejected by men but chosen and precious in God's sight, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

The shaping of the stones occurs outside, before we are included in the building. Everything that has happened to us - the good, bad and ugly - has chiseled and shaped us to fit perfectly when we're taken inside and placed in our proper place.

We carry within us the "spoils" of Egypt that will be melted down, transformed and used for God's kingdom in the Tabernacle. And the utensils, which we had used for self and idol worship, are returned to their proper use in the Temple as we occupy our different ministries and offices in the Body.

Not only the stones but the utensils used in the Temple show this spiritual truth.

"All the [Temple's] utensils must initially be made for sacred purposes. [Before fashioning the utensil, the craftsman must have the intention that they be used for the Temple] If they were initially made for mundane uses, they may not be used for [the Temple's] sake." - From the "Mishnah Torah" of Maimonides, Beit Habechirah 1:20

Like Paul, we are "chosen vessels" (**Acts 9:15**) predestined for His service.

Seeing ourselves as stones in a beautiful Temple - what do we do with that image?

Ancient builders were able to manually - without modern tools - carve out and fashion giant blocks of stone, which then fit together so closely that you couldn't insert a knife blade between them.

This is a picture of being of "one mind." We are admonished to "be of one accord," to be "like-minded" with no divisions, speaking the same thing; to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

Our agreement is not about our various opinions about stuff, but on this one thing - the Cross!

- **Philippians 2:2** - "Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind."

This is also the only way to experience contentment.

When the God of heaven and earth is dwelling in us, we can have no lack. We have no reason to "covet" anything or want more than we have. We have crucified our desire for anything but Him.

We become part of not only the Temple, but the other pictures of praise for God's sovereignty - the order of nature, the symphony of the stars and the cosmos, the parts of the body working together and responding as one, the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us.

Our inter-dependance and agreement with one another reflects our dependance on God alone.

### **The Problem with Types...**

But Hiram and Solomon are simply types, not the real thing. And both Solomon and Hiram fell from their positions. After all, our "predestination" is in a mysterious tension with our willingness to obey and believe.

- **1 Corinthians 10:12** - "Therefore let anyone who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall [into sin]"



Solomon of course was seduced into idolatry by his foreign wives, and his kingdom was divided after his death.

And Hiram?

From the medieval "Second Alphabet of Ben Sira": "God brought Hiram, the King of Tyre, alive into paradise because he built the Temple; at first he was God-fearing and lived in paradise a thousand years; but then he became haughty and claimed to be a god, whereupon he was driven out of paradise into hell."

...Apparently equating Hiram with the "Prince of Tyre" in **Ezekiel 28:1-10**, who also sounds a lot like Satan/Lucifer/Antichrist.

- **Ezekiel 28:2** - "Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God:"

We already read about the resulting destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar (**Amos 1:9-10**), above.

This just show that faith is digital - you're either a slave of Christ or Satan - like Bob Dylan sings, "You gotta serve somebody..." We don't have the luxury of a neutral grey space.