

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

April 16

MONDAY

We read here Solomon's secret for getting so many building projects done: he appointed 3,300 deputies to supervise the 30,000 laborers, 70,000 men to haul the materials, and another 80,000 men to carve the stone from the mountains! All of these workers were drafted into service.

READ: I Kings 5:13-16

While there is much that's good, grand, and even glorious about the reign of Solomon, there is also that which is not so. He forced people to work for him on his various projects. (That, by the way, was exactly what the people were warned about by Samuel years ago when they demanded a king so they could like their neighbors. They ignored his warning and insisted on a king. Now the next generation is paying for the sins of their fathers.) If we would only stop and think about the consequences of our choices in the lives of those who follow after us, we might, in fact, sin less and love God more!

TUESDAY

At Solomon's command, the 80,000 hewers of stone began hewing! The cut huge stones to serve as the foundation of the Temple. Simultaneously, Hiram's men began cutting trees, Solomon's forces began hewing stone, and the Gebalites (slave workers) worked with them to build the House of God.

READ: I Kings 5:17-18

Reading this, it would be good to see that in God's program for building a Kingdom, we are like conscripted workers. Only what conscripts us (or constrains us) is the love of God! We gladly declare ourselves to be bond servants of Jesus Christ, to do His bidding until He comes! Lord, help us to live our lives as servants of the living God, proclaiming His great salvation - builders who keep building till the very end! Lord, help me to finish well.

WEDNESDAY

The Temple was begun in the fourth year of Solomon's reign. It was 90 feet long, thirty feet wide, and forty-five feet high.

READ: I Kings 6:1-3

Why did Solomon delay the building of the Temple for four years? We read in other places that he was solidifying the preparation for the building. Good preparation is not delay. It's the foundation of any good project and is as essential to the finished product as even the last stone placed. So it is with our lives. The time we have on this earth is really preparation time for Heaven. And we do well to prepare ourselves, and, as much as possible, help others around us, to ready themselves for the Trumpet Call!

THURSDAY

Some details (including dimensions) of the Temple (called *the house* here) are given: the windows, the inner walls which provided the Temple with three stories, a nave, storage rooms, and a sanctuary,

READ: I Kings 6:4-6

The simple dimensions of the Temple are not impressive. But the Temple itself was extremely so. Part of that is explained by the sort of details we have listed here. Every phase of the Temple was, of itself, astounding, and the completed project, one that brought gasps of wonder and joy for its beauty and majesty. All this is a sort of picture of the Kingdom of God! The church is that which God has fit together. Your life and mine are but little parts of a great and awesome building that God is building!

FRIDAY

The building of the Temple (called in many versions, the "house") including the storage and function rooms around it, is described.

READ: I Kings 6:7-10

Can you imagine - it was forbidden for the sound of a tool to be heard at the building site! The issue was not so much the silence, but the perfection of the work as it was prepared in the rock quarry. No knocking in a piece that's a little too big or notching off another that doesn't quite fit. Only the best - it was for God! That's the heart cry of each one of us who truly seeks to live for God: only my best for my God! Let us give Him our best this very day!

SATURDAY

God repeats to Solomon an earlier promise - that if he walks in God's ways as his father David did, then God is going to carry out all the other promises He made to David, including the promise that He will dwell with Israel and not forsake her.

READ: I Kings 6:11-13

All that God has planned for us as His children, all the promises He has made to us through the Scriptures, and all the riches of glory which are ours through Jesus Christ, all that, comes with demands upon us: that we would obey God and walk according to His Word. We are commanded to believe on Jesus, and so, when we do that - and believe Jesus to be the Son of God who took away our sin when He died on the cross as the Lamb of God - we are obeying God. And the next step and the next, and the next, as we walk the Christian life, are all to be steps of obedience and faith. Trust and obey. No other way.