

Lesson 6: Solomon the Builder



PROFILE-EASTON ILLUSTRATED DICTIONARY

David's second son by Bathsheba, (2Sa 12). He succeeded his father on the throne in early manhood, probably under 20. His education was entrusted Nathan who called him Jedidiah, i.e., "beloved of the Lord" (2Sa 12:24-25). His father chose him as his successor, passing over the claims of his elder sons: "Assuredly Solomon my son shall reign after me." His history is recorded in 1Ki 1-11 and 2Ch 1-9. His elevation to the throne took place before his father's death, and was hastened on mainly by Nathan and Bathsheba, in consequence of the rebellion of Adonijah (1Ki 1:5-40). During his long reign of forty years the Hebrew monarchy gained its highest splendor. The first half of his reign by far brighter and more prosperous while the latter half was clouded by the idolatries into which he fell, mainly from his heathen intermarriages (1Ki 11:1-8; 1Ki 14:21, 31). Some years before his death David was engaged in the active work of collecting materials (1Ch 29:6-9; 2Ch 2:3-7) for building a temple in Jerusalem for the ark of the covenant. He was not permitted to build the house of God (1Ch 22:8); that honor was reserved to his son Solomon. After the completion of the temple, Solomon engaged in the erection of many other buildings of importance in Jerusalem and in other parts of his kingdom. For the long space of thirteen years he was engaged in the erection of a royal palace on Ophel (1Ki 7:1-12). Solomon also constructed great works for the purpose of securing a plentiful supply of water for the city (Eccl 2:4-6). He then built Millo for the defence of the city, completing a line of ramparts around it (1Ki 9:15, 24; 1Ki 11:27). He erected also many other fortifications for the defence of his kingdom at various points (1Ki 9:15-19; 2Ch 8:2-6). Among his great undertakings must be mentioned the building of Tadmor in the wilderness as a commercial depot, as well as a military outpost.

SOLOMON THE BUILDER

WHEN IN TIME

Mark Location on Timeline discussed in the lesson

Archaeological Periods Levant	Chronological Date	Historical Events	Biblical Historical Event	Bible Periods
Late Bronze Age III	1300-1200 BC			Judges
Iron Age IA	1200-1150 BC	Philistine Invasion of Egypt 1177 BC		Judges
Iron Age IB	1150-1000 BC			Judges/United Kingdom
Iron Age IIA	1000-925 BC	Syrian Threat	Shishak Invasion ~925 BC	United Kingdom
Iron Age IIB	925-722 BC	Assyrian Empire		Divided Kingdom
Iron Age IIC	722-586 BC	Assyrian Empire	Fall of Northern Israel 722 BC	Judah Alone
Babylonian Period	586-538 BC	Babylonian Empire	Fall of Jerusalem 586 BC 1 st Return to Judah 538 BC	Exile/Captivity

WHERE



Solomon's Temple vs. Palace

1 Kings 6-7

Differences and similarities between Solomon's great building projects

Temple	Palace
7 years to build 6:38	13 years to build 7:1
Built according to God's specifications 6:38; see 1 Chron. 28:11-12	No specifications from God
Dimensions: 90 feet long, 30 wide, 45 high 6:2	Dimensions: 150 feet long, 75 wide, 45 high 7:2
Constructed with blocks dressed at quarry 6:7	Constructed with blocks of high-grade stone 7:9
No iron tools used at temple building site 6:7	Stone cut and trimmed to size 7:9
Narrow windows placed high 6:4	Windows placed high, in sets of three 7:4
Inner courtyard surrounded by wall of dressed stone and trimmed cedar beams 6:36; 7:12	Great courtyard surrounded by wall of dressed stone and trimmed cedar beams 7:12
Floors made of juniper, covered in gold; whole interior covered with cedar and overlaid with gold 6:15, 18, 22, 30	Throne hall covered from floor to ceiling with cedar 7:7

Source: The NIV Quickview Bible - www.thequickviewbible.com

Preparation to Build the Temple: 1 Kings 5

The referenced passages deal with the preparation for the building the Temple, in particular how the cedar wood from Lebanon. Description is given on how the wood was brought to Jerusalem.

1 Kings 5:9 (ESV)

⁹ My servants shall bring it down to the sea from Lebanon, and I will make it into rafts to go by sea to the place you direct. And I will have them broken up there, and you shall receive it....

From the bible passage what archaeology remains might give us further insight into the passage?

Mark what you expected to be added to Bible by archaeology?

Archaeology can add to Bible Event:	
Build confidence in general trustworthiness, historical nature and reliability of Bible	
Confirm events described in Bible	
Clarify/Correct/Provide Understanding about our assumptions and conclusions about the past	
Complement or Enhance our knowledge of events, customs and people	
Prove a given event or people mentioned in the Bible	

Building the Temple: 1 Kings 6

The description of the temple begins with its external structure with its overall proportions and its basic form (vv. 2–3); its windows (v. 4); and the strange structure around it with its side chambers (vv. 5–6, 8, 10). The work was carried out with reverence, avoiding the use of iron tools at the temple site: neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron (Ex. 20:25 and Deut. 27:5–6 for the prohibitions that appear to be in mind here). From the bible passage what archaeology remains might give us further insight into the passage?

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Solomon builds his House: 1 King 7:1-12

Solomon spent much more time building his own house or palace complex than he did building God's house, another indication of his divided heart.

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Solomon's other Building Projects: 1 King 9:1-21

Besides building the Temple and his own house he is described as building whatever he desired.

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Digging Deeper into Bible and Archaeology – The following material is provided as reference material or as a deeper discussion and is optional for preparation for the class.

First Kings 9:15 states that Solomon imposed a system of conscript labor that helped fortify “Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer.” One of Yadin’s prize discoveries was a six-chambered city gate connected to a double (or casemate) wall. This wall runs in a north-south line, cutting the upper city in two, an eastern half and a western half. It then encloses the western half of the tell, all that was occupied at this time. Yadin dated this wall and gate to the tenth century B.C. Nearly identical six-chambered gates were also uncovered at Megiddo and Gezer. Yadin attributed all three fortification systems to King Solomon. He did not do radiocarbon dating to confirm these conclusions.

Yadin’s excavation at Megiddo was quite short. Most of the time he spent digging in northern Israel was at the mound of Hazor, where he found a six-chambered gate (three chambers on each side) that was almost identical to the city gate at Megiddo. Yadin knew his Bible well. No one had to call his attention to **1 Kings 9:15**, which tells us that Solomon used forced labor to build three sites—Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer. The Solomonic city of Megiddo was indeed grand, with its impressive six-chambered gateway, casemate city wall, stables and palaces.

Some scholars now argue that the accomplishments of David and Solomon are not simply exaggerated in the Bible but that these kings either were fictitious characters or were nothing more than minor local “chiefs.” In the view of these scholars, neither David nor Solomon would have been capable of executing such large-scale building activities as those commonly attributed to them at Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer. The tenth century BC is especially important because that was the time of King David and King Solomon, the short period when ancient Israel was united under a single monarch. (David reigned from about 1010 B.C. to 970; Solomon, his son, from about 970 to 930 B.C.). If we want to know what archaeology can tell us about this period, we have to know which archaeological discoveries—architecture, artifacts and other finds—date from the tenth century. The problem is that city gates and walls are notoriously difficult to date. They continue in use for a long time and, generally, very little pottery (used for dating) is associated with them. Whatever is found usually dates to the latest period of use.

Yadin identified six major strata at Hazor, further subdivided into nine subphases later excavations find possibly as many as 11 or 12. If excepted based on the pottery, that the earliest Iron Age II stratum at Hazor dates to about 950 B.C.E., then Iron Age II at Hazor lasted approximately 220 years (until 732 B.C.E.). This means that the average stratum lasted only about 35 years (and only 15 years per phase). This is an exceedingly short time. Compare this with other sites: During the same time period, there were only three strata, each averaging about 70 years, at nearby Dan, as well as at Megiddo, Gezer and Lachish, to name just a few sites.



The Bible also helped the University of Chicago excavators identify some of the tripartite buildings at Megiddo. In the same Biblical passage already referred to ([1 Kings 9:15](#)), we are told that Solomon built “cities for chariots and cities for horsemen.” The tripartite buildings were the stables for Solomon’s horses. In tan are walls that were later than 1200 B.C. (Stratum VIIIB) but earlier than the ninth century B.C. (Stratum IV). The excavators could not decide whether these walls belonged to Stratum VA–IVB, VA, VI or VIIA. The stones shown within the wall lines were stones actually found and drawn by the excavators; the walls consisting of hatched lines were reconstructed. It is immediately obvious that a very similar building existed underneath the Stratum IVA stables of the ninth century B.C.

While the continued use of the sites and new constructions such as the stables at Megiddo do raise confusion there is adequate evidence of Solomon as a great builder.

Megiddo



Hazor



Gezer

