

Doctrine of Solomon's Temple

1. The death of David brought Solomon to the throne of Israel.
2. After consolidating his authority and security by a political marriage to the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt (1 Kings 3:1) attention was turned to building the Temple that David had prepared to be constructed.
3. By many accounts the Temple was a magnificent structure constructed on Moriah, one of the heights of Jerusalem, separated from Mount Zion by the Valley of the Tyropoeon over which a bridge had been formed in order to join the two hills (1 Chronicles 22:14; 29:4; 2 Chronicles 3: 1).
4. On the east of the city, on the spot where Abraham had offered up Isaac (Genesis 22:1-14) the temple was to be built.

The Construction of the Temple

5. Because the hill on which the temple was to be built did not afford sufficient level space, a huge wall of solid masonry of great height, in some places more than 200 feet high, was erected across the south of the hill.
6. A similar wall on the eastern side was also constructed. In the spaces between were placed a number of arches and pillars. In order to provide for cleansing for the many bloody sacrifices. Solomon provided a sufficient water supply for the temple by hewing in the rocky hill vast cisterns.
7. Special channels conveyed water from the pools near Bethlehem. Just one of these cisterns had the capacity to contain three million gallons.
8. A conduit led off the overflow to the Kidron. It took three years to prepare before work on the Temple began under the supervision of skilled Phoenician builders and workmen.
9. However, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, 480 years after the Exodus (1 Kings 6:1; 2 Chronicles 3) the work began. Many thousands of laborers and skilled artisans were employed in the work.
10. Stones prepared in quarries underneath the city (1 Kings 5:17, 18) of huge dimension were carefully placed on the massive walls.
11. All the blocks were closely fitted together without any mortar between till the whole structure was completed.
12. No sound of hammer or axe or any tool of iron was heard as the structure arose (1 Kings 6:7).

The Completion of the Temple

13. When the Temple building was completed the inside ceiling was 180 feet long, 90 feet wide, and 50 feet high.
14. The highest point on the Temple that King Solomon built was actually 120 cubits tall—about 20 stories or about 207 feet.
15. It was a magnificent building. In the sanctuary and in the Holy of Holies the floor and walls were covered with pure gold.
16. Then, for thirteen years the Temple stood on the summit of Mount Moriah silent and unused.
17. The main reason for this unusual delay seems to be that Solomon's attention was turned to building his own house (1 Kings 7:1).

The Consecration of the Temple

18. After thirteen years, preparations were made for the dedication of the Temple.
19. The Ark of the Covenant was solemnly brought from the tent in which David had deposited it, to the place prepared for it in the temple (1 Kings 8:1).
20. The glory-cloud, the symbol of God's presence filled the house (1 Kings 8:10).
21. Then Solomon ascended a platform that had been erected for him.
22. In the sight of all the people Solomon lifted his hands to heaven and prayed to God (1 Kings 8:22-53; 2 Chronicles 6, 7).

The Celebration of the Temple

23. The Feast of Dedication for the Temple lasted for seven days.
24. This in turn was followed by the Feast of Tabernacles and marked a new era in the religious history of Israel.
25. On the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Solomon dismissed the vast assemblage of the people, who returned to their homes filled with joy and gladness for the goodness that the Lord had done for His people (1 Kings 8:66).

A Temple without an Idol

26. The singular feature that set apart the Solomonic Temple from other Temples in the ancient world is that there was no idol in it.

27. The majestic structure contained only the Mercy Seat over the Ark and the Cherubim overshadowing the Mercy Seat.
28. This declared to the world that idols are unnecessary for God to be present.
29. The God of Israel was not localized in any sense. Neither was He bound to any other form such as the Ark.
30. The Temple therefore was not necessary because of God's nature. He did not need it. One thousand years later, the first Christian martyr, Stephen, quoting Isaiah 66:1-2, said to a hostile crowd:

"...Solomon built God a house. However the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is my footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord or what is the place of My rest? Has not My hand made all these things?" (Acts 7:47-50, quoting Isaiah 66:1-2).

31. The Temple was built to meet the physical limitations and spiritual needs of God's people.
32. The Temple emphasized the way of salvation to those who ask the Lord for forgiveness and represented the believer's assurance of the grace of God for their joy and blessing. (1 Kings 8:27-30).
- *1 Kings 8:27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?*

33. The Temple also symbolized the fact that God is a prayer hearing God.

- *1 Kings 8:28 Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O Lord my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day toward the place of which You said, "My name shall be there," and that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place.*

34. The Temple to be a place of refuge for the stranger:

- *1 Kings 8:41 Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; 42 (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house; 43 Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.*

35. The Temple is the house of prayer for all people where all nations of the earth should fear God:

- *Isaiah 56:7 Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My House of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.*