

## *Norwood's Notes: Brief Summaries of Bible Stories*

These "notes" are intended to provide a general overview of the basic stories of the Bible in the hope of building greater biblical knowledge and encouraging Bible reading and study. For more information, visit [www.UjimaChurch.org](http://www.UjimaChurch.org)

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### **21 - Highlights from 1 Kings 5-12 & 2 Chronicles 2-10, "Solomon's Temple and Folly"**

King Solomon was determined to fulfill his father's command to build a Temple to the Lord. King David had made plans and prepared supplies for the project before he had died. King Solomon reached out to his father's dear friend, King Hiram of Tyre, to provide wood from the cedars of Lebanon and craftsman to aid in the work (1Kings 5; 2Chr 2). Tens of thousands of craftsmen and laborers from Israel and Tyre joined together to build the temple.

Four years into Solomon's reign, and 480 years after the Exodus from Egypt in the days of Moses, Solomon began to build a Temple for the Lord in Jerusalem. The plans for this new permanent structure were inspired by the design of the mobile Tabernacle that had been constructed in the days of Moses. Beyond the area for burnt offerings was the building itself, which in this case was three stories high. There was a Holy Place and a Most Holy Place, also called the "Holy of Holies," along with side chambers all around. Carvings of winged angels overlaid with gold were put in the Most Holy Place, which was separated from the holy place by a beautifully decorated veil. All of the stone was prepared in a quarry so that no hammer or axe or any other tool of iron was heard in the House of the Lord while it was being built. Beautiful woodwork, wonderful carvings, intricate embroidery, and furnishings of gold and bronze beautified the building, which took seven years to complete (1Kings 6; 2Chr 3&4).

On the day of the dedication of the new Temple, the Ark of the Covenant was brought into the Most Holy Place by the Levitical priests. They sang, sounded trumpets and cymbals, and played other musical instruments in praise of the Lord saying, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever" (2Chr 5:13). The glory of the Lord filled the house in such a way that not even the priests could stay within it. King Solomon praised the Lord and blessed the people. The king asked that the Lord would hear the prayers of the people made in the Temple and be merciful to them (1Kings 8; 2Chr 6). As Solomon finished his prayer, fire came from heaven and burned up the offering and sacrifices made in worship. The people bowed with their faces to the ground (2Chr 7).

When Solomon had finished building the Temple for the Lord and a palace for himself, God appeared to him to let him know that his

prayer would be answered, that the temple would be consecrated by his presence and that he would be attentive to the prayers of repentance from the people. The Lord also renewed his covenant with David by telling Solomon that he would bless him and establish his royal line. But, the Lord also warned the king, letting him know that if he turned to serve other gods, then disaster would fall upon him (1Kings 9; 2Chr 7).

The Queen of Sheba heard of Solomon and the wisdom with which the Lord had blessed him. She came to visit the king with a great entourage and a display of wealth and posed hard questions to King Solomon, all of which he was able to answer. King Solomon left the Queen of Sheba breathless with his wisdom, the beauty of all he had built, and the manner in which he worshiped the Lord. The Queen blessed Solomon and praised the Lord. She gave King Solomon gifts of gold and spices and precious stones, and Solomon gave her anything she desired. Then the Queen of Sheba returned to her own land (1Kings 10; 2Chr 9).

In spite of all of the wealth and wisdom the Lord had given Solomon, his heart was turned as he loved many foreign women who did not honor the Lord, but worshiped false idols instead. King Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines who influenced him to build places of worship for their idols, and even to make offerings and sacrifices to them (1Kings 11). The Lord was angry with Solomon for this sin. Adversaries rose against Solomon and the peace that he had enjoyed was no more. The Lord sent the prophet Ahijah to one of Solomon's trusted officials, a man named "Jeroboam." Ahijah told Jeroboam that the Lord would give him ten of the tribes of Israel, but would leave Judah with the offspring of King Solomon, for the sake of the promise the Lord had made to King David... because even in the midst of Solomon's unfaithfulness, God was still working his plan.

King Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam, but he fled to Egypt and was protected by Pharaoh Shishak. Solomon died, having reigned over all Israel for 40 years (2Chr 9). Solomon's son, Rehoboam, began to reign after his father's death. Jeroboam returned from Egypt and led an assembly to ask Rehoboam lighten the heavy burden that Solomon had placed upon the people and to be kind and merciful. The king initially sought the counsel of the old and wise men, who told him to do as Jeroboam had asked so that he could win the hearts of the people who would serve him gladly. But instead of this wise advice, the king turned to the young and inexperienced counselors and heeded their bad advice to wrathfully threaten the people with punishment unless they served him loyally (1Kings 12; 2Chr 10). Upon hearing this, and in fulfillment of the word of the Lord which had been spoken through the prophet Ahijah, ten of the tribes abandoned Rehoboam and followed Jeroboam instead. The kingdom was split in two, with the northern tribes of Israel following Jeroboam and the southern kingdom of Judah following Rehoboam.