

# Filling the Temple of the LORD

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Date: 28 August 2022

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[ 0 : 00 ] And we're going to turn now to our reading for this evening, and we are working our way through 1 Kings, and 1 Kings chapter 7.

1 Kings chapter 7 Imagine it in your mind. It's a long reading, full of detail, but try and almost paint a picture in your mind of what's going on here.

So 1 Kings chapter 7, and reading from verse 1. Solomon was building his own house 13 years, and he finished his entire house.

He built the house of the forest of Lebanon. Its length was 100 cubits, and its breadth 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. And it was built on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams on the pillars.

And it was covered with cedar above the chambers that were on the 45 pillars, 15 in each row.

There were window frames in the three rows, and the window opposite window in three tiers.

[ 1 : 30 ] All the doorways and windows had square frames, and window was opposite window in three tiers. And he made the hall of pillars. Its length was 50 cubits, and its breadth 30 cubits.

There was a porch in front with pillars and a canopy in front of them. And he made the hall of the throne, where he was to pronounce judgment, even the hall of judgment.

It was finished with cedar from floor to rafters. His own house, where he was to dwell, in the other court back of the hall, was of like workmanship.

Solomon also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken in marriage. All these were made of costly stones, cut according to measure, sawed with saws back and front,

even from the foundation to the coping, and from the outside to the great court.

The foundation was of costly stones, huge stones, stones of eight and ten cubits. And above were costly stones cut according to measurement and cedar.

[ 2 : 40 ] The great court had three courses of cut stone all round, and a course of cedar beams so had the inner court of the house of the Lord, and the vestibule of the house.

And King Solomon sent and brought Hiram from Tyre. He was the son of a widow of the tribe of Nathali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker of bronze. And he was full of wisdom, understanding, and skill for making any work in bronze.

He came to King Solomon and did all his work. He cast two pillars of bronze. Eighteen cubits was the height of one pillar, and a line of twelve cubits measured its circumference.

It was hollow, and its thickness was four fingers. The second pillar was the same. He also made two capitals of bronze to set on tops of the pillars.

The height of the one capital was five cubits, and the height of the other was five cubits. There were lattices of checker work with wreaths of chain work for the capitals on the tops of the pillars, a lattice for one capital and a lattice for the other capital.

[ 3 : 52 ] Likewise, he made pomegranates in two rows around the one lattice work to cover the capital that was on top of the pillar. And he did the same with the other capital. Now, the capitals that were on the tops of the pillars in the vestibule were of lily work, four cubits.

The capitals were on the two pillars, and also above the rounded projection, which was beside the lattice work. There were two hundred pomegranates in two rows all around, and so with the other capital.

He set up the pillars at the vestibule of the temple. He set up the pillar on the south and called its name Jacin, and he set up the pillar on the north and called its name Boaz.

And on the tops of the pillars was lily work. Thus, the work of the pillars was finished. Then he made the sea of cast metal.

It was round, ten cubits from brim to brim, and five cubits high, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference. Under its brim were girds, the ten cubits encompassing the sea all around.

[ 5 : 01 ] The girds were in two rows, cast with it when it was cast. It stood on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east.

The sea was set on them, and all their rear parts were inward. The thickness was a hand breadth, and its brim was made like the brim of a cup, like the flower of a lily.

It held two thousand baths. He also made the ten stands of bronze. Each stand was four cubits long, four cubits wide, and three cubits high. This was the construction of the stands.

They had panels, and the panels were set in the frames, and on the panels that were set in the frames were lions, oxen, and cherubim. On the frames, both above and below the lions and oxen, there were wreaths of beveled work.

Moreover, each stand had four bronze wheels and axles of bronze, and at the four corners were supports for a basin. The supports were cast with wreaths at the side of each.

[ 6 : 07 ] Its opening was within a crown that projected upward one cubit. Its opening was round, as a pedestal is made, a cubit and a half deep. At its opening were carvings, and its panels were square, not round.

And the four wheels were underneath the panels. The axles of the wheels were one piece with the stands, and the height of a wheel was a cubit and a half. The wheels were made like a chariot wheel.

Their axles, their rims, their spokes, and their hubs were all cast. There were four supports at the four corners of each stand. The supports were one piece with the stands.

And on the top of the stand, there was a round band half a cubit high. And on top of the stand, its stays and its panels were one piece with it. And on the surfaces of its stays and on its panels, he carved cherubim, lions, and palm trees, according to the space of each, with wreaths all around. After this manner, he made the ten stands. All of them were cast alike, of the same measure and the same form. And he made ten basins of bronze.

[ 7 : 20 ] Each basin held forty baths. Each basin measured four cubits, and there was a basin for each of the ten stands. And he set the stands five on the south side of the house and five on the north side of the house.

And he set the sea at the southeast corner of the house. Hiram also made the pots, the shovels, and the basins. So Hiram finished all the work that he did of King Solomon on the house of the Lord.

The two pillars, the two bowls of the capitals that were on top of the pillars, and the two lattice works to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were on the tops of the pillars. And the four hundred pomegranates for the two lattice works, two rows of pomegranates for each lattice work, to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were on the pillars.

The ten stands, and the ten basins of the stands, and the one sea, and the twelve oxen underneath the sea. Now the pots, the shovels, and the basins, all these vessels in the house of the Lord, which Hiram made for King Solomon, were of burnished bronze.

In the plain of the Jordan, the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zatharin. And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because there were so many of them.

[ 8 : 40 ] The weight of the bronze was not ascertained. So Solomon made all the vessels that were in the house of the Lord, the golden altar, the golden table for the bread of the presence, the lampstands of pure gold, five on the south side and five on the north, before the inner sanctuary, the flowers, the lamps, and the tongues of gold, the cups, snuffers, basins, dishes, incense, and firepans of pure gold, and the sockets of gold for the doors of the innermost part of the house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the nave of the temple.

Thus, all the work that King Solomon did on the house of the Lord was finished. And Solomon brought in the things that David his father had dedicated, the silver, the gold, and the vessels, and stored them in the treasuries of the house of the laws.

Amen. May God bless his word to us this evening. Imagine, please, that you love to eat fish.

And you are eating the most amazing fish dish you've ever tasted in your life. It is seriously tasty. Every mouthful is rich, full of flavor, and full of wonderful taste.

And you think, goodness, this really is an absolute delight. This is the best thing I think I've ever eaten. But, imagine that as you take a mouthful of food, amid the beautiful flavor and taste, all of a sudden, you get a sharp, stabbing pain in the roof of your mouth.

[10:20] and you realize you've come across a fish bone. An unwanted, horrible fish bone that amid the beautiful pleasure and the glory of the dish is totally spoiling things.

And you carry on eating. You take a few more mouthfuls. And again, it's glorious. It's wonderful. But then again, it happens again. Another fish bone unwanted into the roof of your mouth.

And this carries on and on and on. And you find yourself thinking, yes, this is truly delicious and wonderful. But it's not perfect. It's not perfect.

And friends, that illustrates my experience of reading the reign of King Solomon. The vast majority of chapters that we've looked at so far have been overwhelmingly positive about King Solomon's reign and rule.

And when you look at King Solomon's kingdom, you do see a true glimpse of glory. Now, many times where it's breathtaking, it's magnificent. It's probably the pinnacle of Israel's history as a nation.

[11:27] It really does feel like we're devouring a tasty treat which brings delight and thrills us. But, as you read through the chapters, just occasionally, you come across fish bone moments, unwanted fish bone moments, that declare to us that this is not a perfect kingdom.

Let me give you some examples of unwanted fish bone moments. Can I just check? Can everyone hear me okay? Are you coming across nice? No, great. Okay, good. Excellent. Let's go back and if you've been listening to me preach through this series, you would have noticed that just on the odd occasion, I've skipped over a few sections.

And that was deliberate because I was going to come back to them and look at them all together.

Let's look please. Turn to chapter 4, verse 26. And as you turn there, let me remind you that in chapter 4, Solomon uses his God-given wisdom to rule wisely.

He establishes a great orderly infrastructure that causes the kingdom to flourish. And God's people flourish. They experience wonderful blessings and prosperity and peace and rest.

So on the whole, chapter 4, it is a tasty mouthful. But I think we get an unwanted fishbone moment in verse 26. Let me read verse 26. Solomon also had 40,000, or that could be translated as 4,000.

[12:54] It doesn't matter. It's still a big number. Let's go with 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots and 12,000 horsemen. So Solomon amasses a lot of horse stalls, a lot of horsemen, which can only therefore mean the guy's got a lot of horses.

He has a lot of horses. And you think, what's wrong with that? Answer? Deuteronomy 17 said, kings, do not amass horses. Do not amass a large number of horses.

Why? Because you and the nation of Israel might be tempted to trust in your military power instead of trusting in the Lord alone. It is a fishbone moment in what else is a glorious chapter.

Here's another example. Flick on please to chapter 5, verse 13. And in chapter 5, remember Solomon is moved by the Lord's wisdom. And in this chapter, what he does is he starts to get the ball rolling with the building of a house for the Lord, a temple for the Lord to dwell in Jerusalem amongst his people.

And again, the chapter is yet another wonderful tasty mouthful. And yet, I think we get another unwanted fishbone in verse 13 to 17 where Solomon brings forced labor, conscripted labor upon some 30,000 Israelites.

[14:23] And as we read this, you might think if you know your Bibles back to 1 Samuel chapter 8 where the people of Israel were warned about what would happen if they chose to have a human king reign over them under the Lord.

Amongst other things in that chapter, Israel was warned that a king will take from you. He will take, he will take, he will take. And many of you will end up being his slaves, his servants.

And I think that is what is happening in 1 Kings chapter 5, verse 13 and 17. King Solomon has brought in forced labor. Now it's true, this is not quite slave labor.

This is not full-on slave labor. Back in those days, full-on slave labor was only reserved for Canaanite prisoners, enemies of the Lord. And we'll read about that in 1 Kings chapter 9.

This is not full-on slave labor in chapter 5, 13, but it's still forced labor. And it sounds like a lot of what was warned in 1 Samuel 8 is coming to fruition.

[15:24] I just noticed the working arrangement here for these 30,000 Israelites that Solomon puts in place. Just look at verse 14. They would work one month in Lebanon getting materials for the building of the house of the Lord.

But then they would spend two months at home. And you might listen to that and think, well that sounds like a pretty good idea. That sounds like a pretty good deal. However, in the Hebrew, the text could be translated as these forced laborers worked for one month in Lebanon and then they worked for two months in his house.

That is Solomon's house. And when you read it like that, actually, the forced labor doesn't sound quite so rosy as it did.

Now it is true, friends, honestly, it is true, chapter 4 and chapter 5, they do not condemn Solomon for the horses or for the forced labor. The author does not do that.

But I do think the author puts in these moments just so that we go, oh, that is not quite right. That is not quite right. There is something glorious here, but in amongst the glory there is also things that tell us this is not the perfect kingdom.

[16:40] These are unwanted fishbone moments. And of course, ultimately, these little moments prepare us for tragedy. Tragedy in chapter 11.

Well, tonight in chapter 7, I think we get more glorious details of what Solomon did, but we begin with what I think is another fishbone moment.

I've got three points for this evening, and here's the first one. In verses 1 to 12, we see a decision that is dangerous. A decision that is dangerous in verses 1 to 12.

So in these verses, the author breaks away from Solomon working on the temple. So chapter 6, as we saw last week, was all about Solomon building the temple. And from chapter 7, verse 13 onwards, the focus comes back to Solomon filling the temple.

Building the temple, then filling the temple. And in between, you get this account of where Solomon is building his own house, as verse 1 says.

[17:49] And just be careful, the word house here does not mean a little apartment. The word house here really is shorthand for a massive royal complex of all sorts of other buildings and halls.

And Solomon decided to build this royal complex of buildings and halls, which he called his house, in very, very close proximity to the Lord's house. Let me just run through the different bits of Solomon's house.

In verse 2, we're told that Solomon built part one of his house called the House of the Forest of Lebanon. It could well be that this was a treasury building. We can't be certain. What we do know is that it was the same height as the House of the Lord, but it also covered an area four times bigger than the area that the House of the Lord covered.

It also included a great hall of pillars mentioned in verse 6. It was basically, it was a beast of a building. Then in verse 7, we're told that Solomon built the next part of his house, the Hall of the Throne, also known as the Hall of Judgment, to be a place where judicial matters were carried out. And then in verse 8, we're told that Solomon, in this big royal complex, finished off his own private residence, and Solomon also built a house for Pharaoh's daughter.

[19:13] Verse 9 to 12, we are told that all of these structures were made with the very best of materials, same sort of materials as was used to lay the foundation of the House of the Lord.

Now friends, what are we to make of these verses? Can I just say, personally speaking, I think these are really tricky. I think they're really tricky verses. Over the past week, I've been reading many, not crazy, but really good, faithful, believing Bible commentators.

And these verses divide opinion of every single one of them. Didn't make for a very easy job for me during the week. Usually, if you have a question about the text and all the commentators side on one particular view, you think, well there must be something in that.

Didn't happen this week. And some commentators, they skim over these verses and they just assume they're meant to be read really positively. Really positively. They're just here to show how great Solomon's kingdom had become.

Other commentators aren't so positive. And after giving it much thought, much consideration, that is where I feel the author of the text is wanting us to land.

[20:27] In other words, the author wants us to see that this is another unwanted fishbone moment, or at least it could have the potential of turning into an unwanted fishbone moment.

You see, in building this royal complex, Solomon has made what could turn out to be a dangerous decision. Where am I getting that from in the text? It's a great question.

Well, firstly, in the Hebrew text, in chapter 7, verse 1, it starts with the word, however. Now, that won't be in your Bible translations, but let me just read from the end of chapter 6 into 7.

In the 11th year, in the month of Bull, which is the 8th month, the house of the Lord was finished in all its parts and according to all its specifications. He, Solomon, was seven years in building it. However, Solomon was building his own house 13 years and he finished his entire house. And friends, I think translated like that with the however in place, it doesn't sound as positive as it does without the however.

[ 21 : 37 ] I think the author is actually given a little subtle dig at Solomon here for spending more time on his own complex than he did in the house of the Lord.

My friends, of course, Solomon was totally faithful and obedient when he built the house of the Lord. That is undeniable. I'm not saying he was unfaithful.

But, it is also true that at the same time, Solomon does seem to have been even more dedicated to building his own house. And I think it's a very dangerous decision.

For if Solomon has become more bothered about his own house than the Lord's house, then that does not bode well for the future of the people of God. And also, just thinking about the size of Solomon's house and the way it would have surrounded the temple, that doesn't sit with me well either.

Just listen to Bob File on this point, on this section. He says, Solomon truly does obey the word of the Lord. However, with the building of his own house, there is a real inherent danger that Solomon may well end up treating the temple as though it's his own royal chapel and thus could well pave the way for Solomon building chapels for other gods.

[ 22 : 58 ] Bob also says that in building the royal complex in the way that he does, Solomon may even be in danger of thinking that the Lord is a tenant rather than the landlord.

And friends, another detail that really seals it for me is there in verse 8 that I deliberately paused upon earlier and it's the fact that he built a house for Pharaoh's daughter and just in case we'd forgotten, just in case it slipped our mind, the author reminds us of what happened in chapter 3 where Solomon took this Egyptian princess in marriage.

And again, it's a dangerous decision. God's law warns his young men stay away from unbelieving foreign women and definitely don't marry them because they worship false gods.

And if you marry them then pretty soon you will be in danger of worshipping those false gods too. They will take your heart away from me, says the Lord. And Solomon seems to have completely ignored that warning back in chapter 3 and he still seems to have completely ignored the warning here in building a house for this Egyptian woman right in the heart of the kingdom.

Now friends, you need to think about this yourself. You need to wrestle with this yourself. But this is where I've come to land on.

[ 24 : 23 ] And I might change my mind maybe next week if you see me. But I think really from all these details I think this is a dangerous decision. And indeed when we read on actually it was a dangerous decision.

Well what are the implications for our lives today? Firstly, these verses once again remind us that whilst Solomon's kingdom it is glorious it is full of wonder but it's not perfect.

And this is not the kingdom that we are looking for. Solomon is not the perfect king that we are looking for. Only in the Lord Jesus David's greater son do we find the king who never ever made a dangerous decision during his time on earth and who now will never ever make a dangerous decision that will jeopardize the safety of the kingdom of his people.

See in a strange way this passage should bring us comfort and joy for where Solomon fails and falls short the Lord Jesus doesn't. He will never. And as the Lord's people today we can take great assurance that we live under a king who will only ever rule and reign in perfection.

And friends that will only ever mean blessing for us and eternal security. But secondly I do think these verses also should give us a loving challenge a merciful warning.

[ 25 : 52 ] Friends it is really possible for us to go through a time in our lives when we live faithfully for the Lord serving him doing our bit to see the church family share the gospel with the city and the world see the kingdom spread and yet it might not be long at all before we are tempted to shift in our priorities and the main focus of our lives and our hearts is shifted off of the things of the Lord and onto our own plans and our own schemes.

let's take warning from Solomon as a believer and pray to our heavenly father asking him to work powerfully in us in order to give us hearts that love him hearts that want to put his things first and that we will not make decisions that turn out to be spiritually dangerous.

well we'll think a lot more about that eventually when we get to chapter 11 but that's the first point this evening verses 1 to 12 we see decisions that are dangerous here's the second point in verse 13 to 22 we see pillars that proclaim pillars that proclaim so having told us about Solomon building his own house in verses 1 to 12 in verse 13 the focus is back on Solomon finishing off the temple by filling it with furnishings and artifacts and in verse 14 we're told that Solomon recruits someone to help him with his task he's called Hiram from Tyre now just to be clear this is not the same Hiram of Tyre mentioned in chapter 5 chapter 5 Hiram is actually the king of Tyre this is a different Hiram from Tyre he's a different bloke some translations I think if you have the NIV or maybe another translation he's referred to as Hiram just to try and differentiate him but anyway let's call him Hiram and in verse 14 we're told that this Hiram he was actually an Israelite he did have a father from Tyre who has since deceased but his mother was a widow from the tribe of Naphtali and just look at the way he's described look at this key detail this has not been put in by accident this is deliberate verse 14 he was full of wisdom understanding and skill for making any work in bronze he came to

King Solomon and did all his work and that description that has actually been used before in the Bible where has it been used before in the Bible in the book of Exodus to describe a man called Bezalel now Bezalel was none other than the chief craftsman of the tabernacle and in Exodus 34 you get almost an identical verse to this verse here but the key detail is shared with us there that's not mentioned in Kings but it's presumed and that is that the Lord is the one who's given these men wisdom it's by the Lord's spirit he's given these men the ability to make things to be skilled there's a wideness in God's wisdom and it's not just about making moral decisions but wisdom also helps us in our everyday skills in life and this man Hiram he has been drawn clearly by the Lord he's been raised up and equipped by his spirit for the task of producing beautiful furnishings for the temple of the Lord friends this is another reminder of one of the big points that we looked at last Sunday and that is that the temple the temple being formed and being filled it really is not simply a work of Solomon it's actually a work of the Lord the Lord is the one behind all of us he's the one who's behind Solomon and he's the one behind Hiram he is graciously prompting these men to build because he is going to come down and graciously dwell amongst his people and give them rest establish them in the land and in verse 15

Hiram begins his work by building two massive bronze pillars they were about 27 feet high that is 8.1 metres roughly three quarters of the height of the temple itself and they were 18 feet thick and the capitals on top of the pillars that had decorations on top they added about 7 feet so therefore in total these pillars at the end of the day once they were completed they were 34.5 feet high 10.5 metres and Hiram had them placed where?

[ 30 : 42 ] at the entrance of the temple for all to see you could not miss these pillars and because these pillars were not weight bearing because they weren't holding up a roof it's most likely that they were freestanding they stood by themselves secure and upright on their own why were they made?

answer to proclaim key truths to Israel and to Israel's king and the key is in the names that they've been given verse 21 one pillar was called Jachin and the other pillar was called Boaz and both of these names represent key truths Jachin means the Lord the Lord will establish the name really comes from a Hebrew verb that is used by the Lord regularly when speaking to David specifically back in 2 Samuel 7 where the Lord comes and makes a promise to establish David's household where he says that a son of David will reign over the people of the Lord forever and ever and will bring in God's kingdom and all its perfection the word there is established and that is what this pillar was meaning what it was representing there's a verb also used in 1 Kings chapter 2 remember where Solomon wipes out all of the threats inside the land he says four times in that chapter it comes up again and again and again the Lord has established the kingdom the Lord has established the kingdom the Lord has established the kingdom the other pillar was called Boaz which means in him that is in the Lord is strength or could be translated as by the Lord he the king of Israel will be made mighty so you see what these two pillars are saying here they are proclaiming the Lord will establish and in him in the Lord is strength and they stood as two sentinels if you like in front of the temple and the first highlights the promise of the Lord the second the power of the Lord to fulfill those promises the first recalls what the Lord has said the second suggests that the Lord can deliver on what he has promised Jachin points to the original anchor of the Lord's word but Boaz points to the ongoing adequacy of the Lord to bring that word to pass these pillars imply

that if Israel if they reject the Lord if they reject the Lord then they will not stand unstable as those two pillars they will come crashing down if they do not turn to the Lord if they reject him if they reject his grace if they do not walk by the obedience of faith if they try to exist in a kind of proud self-righteous self-reliant way they will not stand they will come crashing down but if they trust in the Lord then they will be established and he will strengthen them forever forever and friends we do not have two massive bronze pillars but these are still two truths that you and I as Christians must remember and live by every day of our lives today as the people of God as the true Israel of God the church of Jesus

Christ in this age one commentator says this we may dispense with the pillars but we must retain their testimony and if we as a church if we want to stand firm we must keep on looking to the Lord to establish us to make good on all of his promises and must also look to him for strength if we reject him if we as a church become proud self-reliant self-righteous we will crash down but if we trust him we will stand forever so remember that this week pillars that proclaim here's the third point in our sermon this evening the third point in verse 23 to 51 we see a delight in the detail a delight in the detail now in these verses the author carries on giving us a careful account of the work of Hiram and Solomon as they produce more deeply symbolic furnishings for the temple and as you read through these verses the temptation is to just switch off to switch off maybe these are the type of verses that if you come to in your bible reading plan you might be tempted just to go skim right over them and go into the next bit but that would be wrong that would be wrong actually the author he wants us to delight in these details in the same way that he does and he delights in them you really get that sense that that is what he's doing for example let's have a look at the depiction of the bronze sea and the construction of it in verse 23 to 26 this was a gigantic bronze basin its diameter was about 15 feet four and a half meters it was about half that in height its circumference was 45 feet that's 13 and a half meters it was three inches thick and it held roughly 11 gallons of water [ 36 : 11 ] I typed it into google how many liters is that because I don't do gallons and apparently it's 41,000 liters of water I hope I've got that right but you can correct me wrong tell me if I'm wrong later on 41,000 liters of water and it was all held up at the bottom by these beasts these beastly bulls bronze bulls at the bottom why the excitement about this bronze sea why is he so delighted in telling us about all these things well one answer is because of what it stood for remember in scripture the sea was often a symbol of the forces of chaos and evil which God subdued in the creation of the world think back those of you who were here for a wee while ago we looked at the book of Job and one of the speeches of the Lord to Job he said Job were you there at the creation no well I was and at the creation

I was there when the sea came crashing forward looking to dominate and overtake everything and all that the sovereign Lord had to do at that moment was speak to the sea and say no further and like that the sea was subdued within strict limits or just think about Psalm 24 the start of Psalm 24 which says the earth is the Lord's the fullness thereof why because he founded the earth on the sea and established it there's that word again on the rivers as one of the reasons this bronze sea was made and placed in the temple one of the reasons why the author delights in it is because it declares to him so clearly that the Lord is sovereign even over evil even over the sea there's no dualism in this world evil in the kingdom of darkness are not equals with the Lord but are under his sovereign power the evil one in his forces of chaos can only ever do that which the Lord allows them to carry out that is the truth that this bronze sea in the temple symbolized and it's why our author delights our God reigns and it should delight our hearts today too we can be sure that he is sovereignly controlling and using evil for his own good even if it sweeps over our lives so that's clearly one reason why the author gives us such detail of making the stuff that filled the temple these things proclaim big truths about the Lord for his people to delight in but there's another reason why he gives us all these details about the intricate design and the craftsmanship that was carried out by Hiram he is giving I take it as a reminder as he goes through all of these details and all of the work and all of the materials they used and all of the painstaking process that would have taken them ages he is driving home a teaching point that we heard in chapter 6 but friends he really wants to drive it home to us so that we don't forget it and the big lesson for us to seal upon our hearts is this that the

Lord our God he deserves the very best he deserves the very best and I take it that is why the author is so delighted in the activity of these two men because they are giving the Lord the very best listen to Ralph Davis on this point he says this is that not the position of the writer of 1st Kings

7 is he not suggesting that the intricate carefully wrought beauty is most fitting for the God of the Bible is he not implying that nothing can be too good too lavish too well done for such a marvellous God we must never offer slop to God who would have thought that the Holy Spirit might use 1 Kings 7 to convict us of the flippant and casual procedures we sometimes call worship our God deserves the very best and friends if you feel convicted as I do I felt very convicted when we looked at chapter 6

I feel very convicted this week now let's not lose heart if you feel convicted that we've not given the Lord our best then we must turn to him and remember those pillars remember that he is a gracious God who promises to establish those who turn to him who trust in his promises the gracious Lord who promises to strengthen his people and to change us to give us what we need to live the life of faith the gracious God who says I will strengthen all those who seek my face so brothers and sisters let's ask our Lord let's be turning to the Lord as a church and as individuals all the time to help us to want to give him our very best not because we're going to earn our salvation because our salvation has been gifted to us in Christ alone but let's pray that in response to the Lord's saving grace we all offer up the very best of our lives to him in worship so that we as living stones in Christ today in the true temple will reflect his splendor the splendor of the immortal invisible

God only wise we cannot do this on our own on our own we will come crashing down but if we turn to the Lord for strength he will help us he will change us so brothers and sisters let's bow our heads and we'll do that now let's turn to him in prayer almighty God heavenly father we praise you for the grace that you've shown us in your son we rejoice to know that you are the God who has promised to establish those who turn to you those who trust in what you've said and promised you are also the God who graciously invites your people to call upon you for strength all the time knowing this heavenly father it brings great joy to our hearts for we confess that we so desperately need your strength alone we're helpless and hopeless and weak and sinful and fickle so father please strengthen us strengthen us in our daily walk strengthen us in our fight against sin so that we will seek to offer you our very best so that we will do all that every day of our lives more and more until the day you call us home or until the day when the

[ 43 : 37 ] Lord Jesus appears in glory to bring in the new creation that glorious temple forever please immortal invisible God only wise sanctify us so that we will reflect your splendor and your goodness and your beauty into the dark dreary lost world around us and we pray this in Jesus name and for his sake amen