

1Kings 5:1 ¶ And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David.

Hiram, the king of Tyre, sent his servants to Solomon as a show of respect for David's death and to acknowledge him as David's successor. It seems that Hiram treasured David's friendship. Because they were close friends, David had shared with Hiram his desire to build a house to the LORD and that the LORD would not allow him that privilege because he had shed so much blood.

1 Chronicles 22:7–8 “And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God: But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.”

1Kings 5:2 And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying,

1Kings 5:3 Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

1Kings 5:4 But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.

1Kings 5:5 And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name.

Solomon evidently sent Hiram's servants back to him with a message. He told Hiram that he was aware that he knew that David was not allowed to build a house to honor the LORD because he was a man constantly at war. Solomon's kingdom, however, had no enemies because the LORD had established him in peace with the neighboring kingdoms. In light of that fact, Solomon was ready to build a temple to the LORD in fulfillment of the LORD's promise to his father David. The LORD had told David that his son that succeeded him as king would build a house to His name. The Chronicler states that with this promise the LORD called Solomon by name as David's successor.

*1 Chronicles 22:9–10 “Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for **his name shall be Solomon**, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.”*

An interesting tidbit—The Hebrew for “adversary” in verse 4 makes reference to Satan. It just reminded me that enemies of men and women who follow the LORD in faith and obedience are servants of Satan. During Solomon's reign, the LORD did not permit Satan to stir up enemies against him.

1Kings 5:6 Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of

Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that *there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.*

Solomon went on to request that Hiram command his people to cut down cedar trees from Lebanon to build the temple. He proposed to have men of both kingdoms work together to accomplish the task. He also promised to pay Hiram's servants whatever he asked. He admitted that no man in Israel could cut timber as well as the Sidonians.

The Chronicler adds a bit more information.

2 Chronicles 2:3–6 “And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, even so deal with me. Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel. And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods. But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?”

From these verses we learn that Solomon asked Hiram to deal with him as he had dealt with his father David when he needed timber to build his house. He told Hiram that he wanted to build a house dedicated to the LORD that could essentially replace the function of Moses' tabernacle as the place where the people could continue to make the offerings and sacrifices in accordance with the LORD's commands. He declared that the house had to be magnificent because “our God” is above all gods. Based on Hiram's answer in the next verse, it sounds like he acknowledged the God of Israel as his God.

Solomon did admit that what he wanted to do was nigh on impossible. The heaven and heaven of heavens could not contain the LORD. All he could hope to accomplish was to provide a house from which they could offer sacrifices to Him.

“who am I” – A phrase with which we can all identify when thinking about trying to do anything “for the LORD.” I think we are better off thinking, “blessed am I” to be able to do anything that testifies to our desire to honor Him.

1Kings 5:7 And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.

1Kings 5:8 And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for: *and* I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.

1Kings 5:9 My servants shall bring *them* down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me,

and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive *them*: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household.

As stated above, it certainly sounds like Hiram has accepted God as his own LORD. He at least declares honor to the LORD for giving David such a wise son to succeed him as king. The Chronicler adds that he recognized the LORD as the creator of heaven and earth

2 Chronicles 2:11–12 “Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them. Hiram said moreover, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the LORD, and an house for his kingdom.”

2Chronicles 2:16 And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need: and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to Joppa; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem.

Hiram told Solomon that he had considered his proposal and agreed to supply all the timber that he needed. His servants would transport the wood from Lebanon by way of the sea to Joppa, and Solomon’s servants could take it to Jerusalem. In return, he requested that Solomon provide food for his household.

1Kings 5:10 ¶ So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees *according to all his desire.*

1Kings 5:11 And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.

It is noted that Hiram kept up his end of the bargain, and Solomon gave Hiram 20,000 measures of wheat and 20 measures of pure oil each year to supply Hiram’s household.

Gill provides this note on the amounts: Wheat—“This measure was the Hebrew measure "cor", or "corus", and, according to Bishop Cumberland⁶⁵, its contents were 17,477 solid inches; it was equal to ten ephahs, each of which held two gallons and an half, and the cor held seventy five wine gallons five pints, and somewhat more; according to some⁶⁶, what it held was equal to six hundred forty eight Roman pounds; so that twenty thousand of them contained 12,960,000 pounds of wheat. Oil—“...the same kind of measure is here expressed as before, and the quantity answered to 12,960 Roman pounds; another writer⁶⁷ reckons a cor to contain 1080 Roman pounds; so that Hiram had every year 21,600 pounds of oil.

It is noted by commentators that Josephus claims to have seen the preserved records of these transactions.

1Kings 5:12 And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.

1Kings 5:13 And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.

1Kings 5:14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, *and* two months at home: and Adoniram *was* over the levy.

1Kings 5:15 And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;

1Kings 5:16 Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which *were* over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

1Kings 5:17 And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, *and* hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

1Kings 5:18 And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew *them*, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

Once again we are told that the LORD gave Solomon wisdom as He had promised him, and it is evident in the way he went about overseeing the building of the temple. There was peace treaty between Hiram and Solomon that affirmed their friendship.

Solomon instituted a draft to gather the men needed to send to Lebanon to work with Hiram's men; Adoniram was appointed to supervise the process. Thirty thousand men were to serve in groups of 10,000 that worked for a month in Lebanon and then two months at home. It seems that these men were Israelites.

Another 153,600 men were drafted for more labor-intensive work such as carrying burdens and cutting the needed stone from the mountains. The Chronicler tells us that these workmen were to be drafted from among the foreigners living in Israel.

2 Chronicles 2:17–18 “And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred. And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to be bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand to be hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people a work.”

Seventy thousand men were used to transport materials, and 80,000 men were assigned to help in cutting stone. Besides Solomon's chief officers, 3,300 other men were designated as supervisors alongside Solomon's chief officers.

According to the king's command, they brought very large stones, valuable stones and cut stones (that had been smoothed out) to lay the foundation for the temple. It is noted that Solomon's men and Hiram's men from Gebal (from the Hebrew for “stonesquarers”) worked together to provide the timber and stone needed to build the temple.