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Fourth Quarter.

Lesson 4.—Oct. 26. 1 Kings 6: 1-14.

THE TEMPLE BUILT.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Mine house shall be called an house of
prayer.—Isaiah 56: 7.

1. In the four hundred and eightieth year.—It is upon this statement that all the earlier portion of what is called the "received chronology" depends. The year of the foundation of the Temple can be approximately fixed by adding the remaining years of Solomon's reign, the years of the kings of Judah, and the seventy years of the captivity, to the received date for the accession of Cyrus to the throne of Babylon. In the month Zif, i. e., April-May. The word signifies "splendor." The month was probably so called because of the brilliancy of its flowers (Gesen., Keil, al.), which is the second month. This explanation is added because before the captivity the months, with the exception of Abib, appear to have had no regular names, but were almost always designated by numbers. It was seven and a half years in building, and was finished in November, 1005 B. C.

2. And the house, i. e., the main building, the temple proper. The length thereof was threescore cubits. The cubits were probably 18 inches, so that the building was 90 ft. long, 30 ft. wide, and 45 ft. high. The whole height was thirty cubits, but the rooms into which this space was divided, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies, were finished only 20 cubits, "30 ft." in height (1 Kings 6: 16: 20). In all its dimensions, length, breadth, and height, the sanctuary itself was exactly double those of the Tabernacle.

3. As in the Tabernacle, the Temple consisted of three parts,—the Holy of Holies, the Holy Place, and the Porch. In the Holy of Holies there were only the cherubim and the Ark. In the Holy Place stood a table covered with plates of gold (the table of shew bread), and the altar of incense. The porch, or portico, extended across the whole front. It was formed by simply prolonging the side walls, and possibly the roof. It seems that even the inside of the porch was lined with gold. Before the temple of the house, i. e., the front compartment, the Holy Place. The rear compartment, or Holy of Holies is called, in ver. 5, "the oracle."

4. Windows of narrow lights.—The literal interpretation is "closed beams" (cf. chap. 7: 4, 5), which the most competent scholars now understand to mean "closed or fixed lattices," i. e., windows, the lattice-work of which could not be opened and closed at pleasure, as in ordinary dwelling-houses. The windows seem to have been placed high in the walls, above the chambers spoken of in ver. 5-8.

5. Chamber.—The Hebrew word here used is in the singular, and would perhaps be best translated "a lean-to." Against the walls of the house.—That is, the lean-to completely surrounded three sides of the building,—the north, the west, and the south. It abutted both upon the Holy Place, the main chamber of the Temple, 40 cubits long and 20 wide, into which the worshipper entered from the porch, and also upon the oracle, or Holy of Holies, a cube of 20 cubits (vers. 20), which lay beyond. Temple.—The Holy Place. Oracle.—The Holy of Holies. Made chambers round about.—The three stories, one above the other, of this side structure had each literary "ribs" (joists), which can mean nothing else than that they were divided by partitions into distinct compartments.

6. The nethermost, or lowest, range of rooms. This was 7½ ft. broad, the next 9 ft., and the third-story chambers 10½ ft. broad. From ver. 10 we learn that they were each 5 cubits or 7½ ft. high. All these are side measures. Narrowed rests.

One cubit wide, made by the rebate-ment of the wall of the Temple, which was very thick at the bottom, but was made one cubit less in thickness at the height of each story of chambers. That the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house, i. e., the timbers should not let into the walls. There may have been two reasons for this: (1) that the large, costly stones should remain whole and uninjured; that no holes should be cut into them for the purpose of inserting the ends of the ceiling-beams. (2) It appeared unseemly to have the side chambers, which were for semi-secular purposes, made an actual part of the sacred edifice.

7. This verse is a parenthesis, perhaps suggested by the walls in the temple referred to in ver. 6, and giving one reason why such stones already finished should not be cut into for rests for the chamber beams. And the house... was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither. This was probably in obedience to the prohibition recorded in Exod. 20: 25 and Deut. 27: 5. It expressed the king's sense of the sanctity of the work. The tranquility of the scene must not be broken by the clang of inharmonious sounds. "Like some tall palm, the noiseless fabric grew." The fact is suggestive. The building up of the Church of God is a silent, hidden process. Outward visible agencies must be employed, but the real constructive forces are out of sight.

8. The door for the middle chamber, i. e., the door which gave access to the mid-most "set of chambers." There was a single door in the right or south wall, from which a winding staircase ascended to the second tier, while another ascended from the second to the third.

9. So he built the house.—The Temple is here distinguished from the wings or chambers attached to it. The internal fittings were added afterwards (see ver. 15-22). Covered the house, i. e., roofed it.

10. See on ver. 6.

11. And the word of the Lord came to Solomon.—Probably through the prophet Nathan. It cannot well have been a direct communication, for the second direct revelation is mentioned in chap. 9: 2 (comp. 3: 5).

12. Concerning this house.—The meaning is, "So far as this house goes, thou art obedient (2 Sam. 7: 13; 1 Chron. 17: 12, etc.); if thou wilt be obedient in other things also, then will I perform my word," etc., God's promises being always conditional. My word which I spoke unto David.—The promises made to David were—(1) that he should be succeeded by one of his sons (2 Sam. 7: 12; Ps. 132: 11); (2) that the kingdom should be established in the line of his descendants forever, if they were faithful (132: 12); and (3) that the Israelites should be no more afflicted as beforetime (2 Sam. 7: 10). These promises are now confirmed to Solomon, but on the express condition of obedience, and two further promises are added (see the next verse).

13. And I will dwell among the children of Israel.—As He manifested His presence among them, in the old tabernacle (Ex. 25: 8, 24, 45), so He would manifest His presence and reveal His will in the temple. And will not forsake... Israel. This promise, if not absolutely new, seems to have been at any rate more positive and general than any previous similar promise. Moses promised the people that God would not forsake them in their struggles with the Canaanites (Deut. 31: 68); and God made a similar promise to Joshua (Josh. 1: 5). But the assurance now given seems to be that God will not at any time or under any circumstances wholly forsake Israel.

14. So Solomon built the house and finished it.—Though these words are a repetition of ver. 9, yet they are not without significance. Encouraged by the promise just made, he proceeded with the interior, of which the narrative henceforth treats. This marvelously beautiful and attractive temple had great influence upon the Jewish nation. (1) It strengthened the worship of God. (2) It encouraged faith in the reality of one great infinite God. (3) Its services gave

an example of worship for the whole nation. (4) It drew the people to the three great annual religious festivals, and thus (5) it was a bond of unity to the nation.

Heaven is the day of which grace is the dawn; the rich, ripe fruit, of which grace is the lovely flower; the inner shrine of that most glorious temple to which grace forms the approach and outer court.—Dr. Guthrie.

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