



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

1 KINGS 1-11 &
1 CHRONICLES

Week 1

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Before You Begin Your Journey...

The reigns of David and Solomon are often called Israel's "Golden Age." The kingdom is unified and as large as it will ever be. Never before and never again will there be such prosperity in ancient Israel. The peace and security forged under David's reign allows for commerce and wealth of epic proportions under Solomon. Building projects dot the landscape of Israel, crowned by Solomon's magnificent palace and Temple. David and Solomon do more than any other monarchs to shape the culture of Israel—David sets the standards for worship in Israel with his songs, liturgies and organization of priests and musicians. Solomon's accumulation of wisdom and knowledge attracts scholars and dignitaries from all over the world. Jerusalem is both literally and figuratively a "city on a hill."

But, even in the midst of this golden age, trouble is brewing. Solomon's initial humility succumbs to pride. His prosperity and romantic conquests lead him to compromise with God. The aftermath of Solomon's reign would see a divided kingdom, hostility from the surrounding nations, economic downturn and increasing acceptance of paganism.

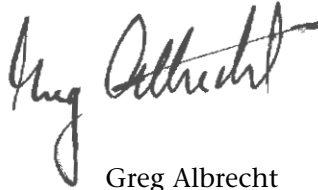
In addition to 1 Kings 1-11, his volume also covers the book of 1 Chronicles. Aside from its concise history of the reign of David, 1 Chronicles offers what some regard as one of the more boring parts of the Bible—genealogies. Some of these genealogies are unclear and leave questions to be answered. Yet for the original readers of 1 Chronicles—Israelites returning from exile—these sections of Scripture were profoundly significant, serving to anchor them to their ancient heritage.

When we read these lists of often odd-sounding (and sometimes humorous) names, we are reminded that the ancient nation of Israel was made up of of real people who

lived and died—husbands , wives, children and families. These lists of people who lived millennia ago are interspersed with editorial comments, letting us know the steadfast faith of some of these people.

Their examples, however terse, can still inspire and encourage us across the ages.

And while the details may be sketchy in this part of Scripture, we are reminded that we will learn the full story from some of these people on the other side of eternity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Albrecht". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Greg Albrecht
President, Plain Truth Ministries

How to Use the CWR Bible Survey...

1—Read and study at your own pace. This is a devotional. It is designed to help you consider and ponder the great truths of God's written revelation. It is designed to help you worship and come to know God. We plan to cover the entire Bible in 43 volumes, and while that sounds like a long time, don't be in a hurry. Take your time! Even though each volume is divided into bite-size daily lessons, you may want to take two days on each "daily" lesson.

2—We suggest you set aside a special time for the *CWR Bible Survey* every day. We recommend allowing 30-45 minutes, but even if you can only spare 15 minutes, try to make it part of your regular schedule. You will find that the *CWR Bible Survey* will be an invaluable resource for facing your daily challenges.

3—You will need a good Bible. This might be an excellent time for you to consider purchasing a study Bible. Plain Truth Ministries has reviewed many of the study Bibles that are available, and in cooperation with Thomas Nelson and Zondervan, we are pleased to be able to offer two superb study Bibles that will be an excellent resource and help to you. Please see the back pages of this book for more details.

4—Always read the assigned passage of the daily lesson in your Bible first. Each daily lesson builds upon the portion of the Bible being covered that day. You may want to begin by praying about what God has in store for you as you read, and then look at the questions and background information.

5—Consider the format of each daily lesson. Almost every daily lesson will include:

- **Opening Up to the Word** —a section designed to help you open your mind to the teaching God has inspired.
- **Digging Into the Word**—this section will encourage you to get your nose into the Bible and think deeply about what it says.
- **Living Out the Word**—here you will be challenged to consider the practical implications for your life. How does this passage help you live?

•**Window On the Word**—will offer key insights to help you more clearly understand the daily Bible passage.

6—After you finish the daily lesson, take some quiet time. You may simply think, look out the window, take a walk, or even get down on your knees. But use this time to let this daily lesson sink in. Ask God to show you what he wants you to understand from your reading and study.

7—Consider the *CWR Bible Survey* for small groups in which you may be involved. Tell your friends about it. If you are involved in a small group that meets for prayer and Bible study, introduce your group to it. Many are seeking an easy-to-read guide to help them understand the Bible and to help them know God. The *CWR Bible Survey* can do that!

•**Abbreviations Used in the *CWR Bible Survey***—

Genesis	Ge	Nahum	Na
Exodus	Ex	Habakkuk	Hab
Leviticus	Lev	Zephaniah	Zep
Numbers	Nu	Haggai	Hag
Deuteronomy	Dt	Zechariah	Zec
Joshua	Jos	Malachi	Mal
Judges	Jdg	Matthew	Mt
Ruth	Ru	Mark	Mk
1 Samuel	1Sa	Luke	Lk
2 Samuel	2Sa	John	Jn
1 Kings	1Ki	Acts	Ac
2 Kings	2Ki	Romans	Ro
1 Chronicles	1Ch	1 Corinthians	1Co
2 Chronicles	2Ch	2 Corinthians	2Co
Ezra	Ezr	Galatians	Gal
Nehemiah	Ne	Ephesians	Eph
Esther	Est	Philippians	Php
Job	Job	Colossians	Col
Psalms	Ps	1 Thessalonians	1Th
Proverbs	Pr	2 Thessalonians	2Th
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Timothy	1Ti
Song of Songs	SS	2 Timothy	2Ti
Isaiah	Isa	Titus	Tit
Jeremiah	Jer	Philemon	Phm
Lamentations	La	Hebrews	Heb
Ezekiel	Eze	James	Jas
Daniel	Da	1 Peter	1Pe
Hosea	Hos	2 Peter	2Pe
Joel	Joel	1 John	1Jn
Amos	Am	2 John	2Jn
Obadiah	Ob	3 John	3Jn
Jonah	Jnh	Jude	Jude
Micah	Mic	Revelation	Rev

1 KINGS 1-11

1 CHRONICLES

The Golden Age
of Israel

Introduction to 1 Kings 1-11

Authorship: The Talmud attributes both 1 and 2 Kings to Jeremiah or to someone whom he knew well. The endings of Jeremiah and 2 Kings are identical (2Ki 24:18–25:30; Jer 52:1-34). 1 and 2 Kings were originally one book. Thus the latest event alluded to in 2 Kings—the release of King Jehoiachin of Judah around 561 B.C.—is evidence that the books could not have been completed before the Babylonian captivity (c. 586-538 B.C.).

A number of authors may have contributed to 1 and 2 Kings, including the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah 36-39 follows 2 Kings 18-20 closely. One thing is certain: the compilers used earlier sources (1Ki 11:41). The editors had access to first-hand information in court histories and annals (1Ki 14:29).

Date: The book was probably completed sometime in the 500s B.C. though the material discussed begins in the 900s B.C. For comparison, Solomon's reign is usually dated as 971 to 931 B.C.

Setting and purpose: 1 Kings 1-11 describes "Israel's Golden Age" under David and Solomon, while at the same time serious cracks and strains appear in Israel's national unity.

1 Kings 1-11 contains five main themes:

1. *God rules in the kingdoms of men.* He is the Sovereign Lord (2:26). He is the God who commands and requires trust and obedience (9:4). He raises up and deposes kings (11:34-39). He answers prayers and grants deliverance. His sovereignty means that both the righteous and evil actions of kings comply with his plan.

2. *God alone is worthy of worship.* Worship and prayer are major themes in 1 Kings 1-11. Jerusalem is reconfirmed as the place of worship for Yahweh, the God of Israel. He is revealed as God over all the earth. The Temple becomes an important place of pilgrimage and sanctuary.

3. *God keeps his promises to David.* Through Solomon, David's dynasty endures (8:25; 9:5) but even David is aware that this promise has conditional elements (2:4). Kings and rulers prevail

only if they live by God's standards. David is held up as a model and as founder of the City of David.

4. *The importance of attitude.* When Solomon humbly seeks God, he is blessed (1Ki 3:7-12). When he becomes successful and self-reliant, his kingdom begins to slip (11:11).

5. *Human grandeur is folly without God in the picture.* Jesus referred to "Solomon in all his splendor " (Mt 6:29). Yet the last things we read about Solomon are disgraceful (11:1-8).

Distinctive features: For some, 1 Kings 1-11 seems to paint a somewhat glorified portrait of Solomon and his empire. The theology behind this account is that God is keeping his promises to the patriarchs—promises of national greatness. These chapters reveal Israel at the height of its power and glory as a contrast to later events in 1 and 2 Kings, which show the decline of the nation through sin and the resulting punishment by God.

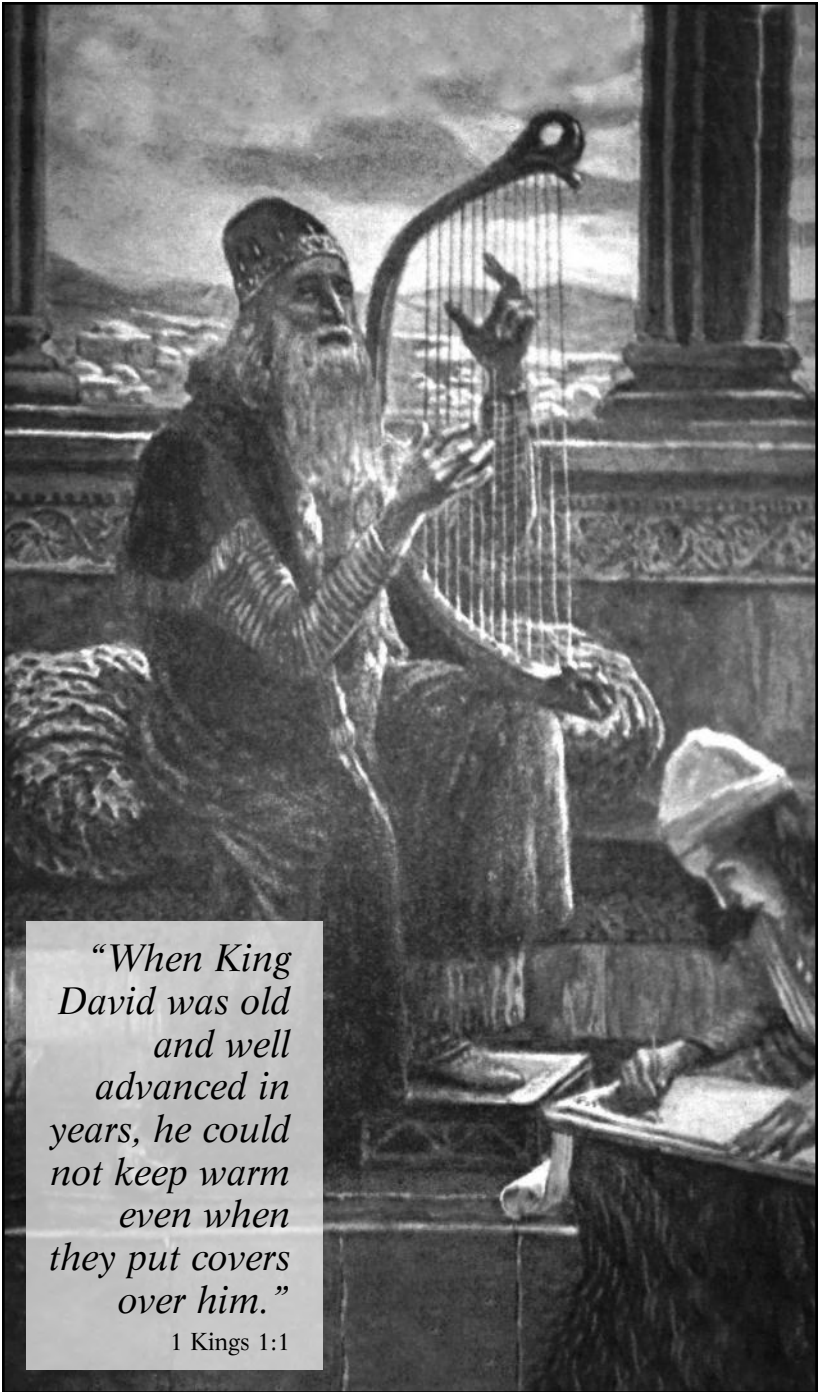
In biblical history, not even the kings are heroes. "The kingdom is the Lord's" is the consistent moral and theological drum-beat. God is the real hero, while prophets and kings of Israel are the key players. Solomon builds the Temple, yet worships pagan gods. He possesses the wisdom of God (1Ki 3:28), yet his wives turn him away from faithful devotion to God (1Ki 11:4). The lesson for modern Christians is clear. We cannot divide our affections between God and anything else, whether it is career success, public opinion or even family.

This section of Scripture is not without hope, however.

Donald Wisemen puts it well in his book, *1 and 2 Kings*. "Kings is a unified work...It is also a reminder of God's persevering love and grace despite his being rebuffed."

Reading outline:

Day	Text	Theme
1-2	1 Kings 1:1–2:12	Solomon Takes Charge
3-6	1 Kings 2:13–4:34	Wisdom Brings Security
7-8	1 Kings 5:1–6:38	Building the Temple
9-10	1 Kings 7:1–8:21	Solomon in All His Glory
11-12	1 Kings 8:22–9:9	A Model Prayer
13-15	1 Kings 9:10–11:43	A Shadow Over Solomon



“When King David was old and well advanced in years, he could not keep warm even when they put covers over him.”

1 Kings 1:1

Father to Son

DAY 1

1 Kings 1:1-53

Can you remember one time when you didn't follow the advice of a parent? What happened?

- 1.** Who was Adonijah? Who supported him (vs. 5-10)?
 - 2.** How did Nathan and Bathsheba prevent the attempted coup (vs. 11-27)?
 - 3.** Even on his deathbed David was more than a match for his rebellious son, Adonijah. What did David advise (vs. 28-40)?
 - 4.** How did this debacle end (vs. 41-53)?
-

- 1.** The books of Kings have been described as the most political of all the books in the Bible. Does this chapter bear this out?
- 2.** Have you ever seen a case of "office politics" get nipped in the bud by decisive leadership? Have you seen it go the other way? How did you react?
- 3.** One commentator writes: "In a world of idolatry, and in a nation that was continually falling into idolatry, David stood like a rock for God." Do you agree?
- 4.** In what ways is idolatry still a modern problem?
- 5.** The maneuvering around the throne in David's last days provides Bible students and teachers with a quandary about where to draw the line between human effort and divine direction. Can you think of an example where God intervened in spite of human effort?

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

Passing the Baton

1 Kings 2:1-12

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever seen leadership pass from father to son? Was it successful?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. What was David's basic charge to Solomon (vs. 1-3)? Was David aware that the Lord's promises to him and his dynasty were conditional upon righteous performance (v. 4)?
2. Payback time. David's aide Joab had spilled a lot of blood. What was David's advice regarding Joab (vs. 5-6)?
3. How did David demonstrate loyalty to those who helped him when he needed it most (v. 7)?
4. Shimei was an old enemy of David, guilty of cursing the ruler—a capital offense (Ex 22:28; 1Ki 21:10). Was David's advice cruel or unusual in the circumstances (vs. 8-9)? Why did David want Solomon to do the "dirty" work that David wasn't willing to do himself?

LIVING
out the Word

There is a lot in this chapter that reminds us of the well-known text, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (Ex 21:24). But Jesus said that those who live by the sword would die by the sword (Mt 26:52). How would you explain the apparent contradiction, and why do you think David is exempted from this penalty?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Note the data given on David's reign (vs.10-12). Many researchers think the expression "forty years" is a rounded off expression for a generation (Ac 13:36). This summary formula will be seen again in Kings. Readers of the Bible soon become familiar with such recurring phrases—"forty years," "rested with his fathers," "when the time drew near." These simple repetitions are known as **formulas**—literary devices or structures that serve various functions. They remind the reader of turns or dramatic events in the action of the narrative. They also help link together the disparate accounts of such an extended history.*

*“When the time
drew near for
David to die, he
gave a charge to
Solomon his son.”*

1 Kings 2:1



DAY 3

Settling Scores or Just Desserts?

1 Kings 2:13-3:3

OPENING
up to the Word

Some people never seem to get the point. Have you known people like this?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Solomon was offended by the fact that Adonijah had asked for David's concubine. In ancient times, appropriating a royal concubine was tantamount to a bid for kingly power (2Sa 3:6-8; 16:21-22)? Why do you think Adonijah did this, knowing what the penalty might be?

2. How did Solomon treat the high priest Abiathar (2:26-27)?

3. Joab's turn came next. Why was Joab deserving of this punishment (2:32-3)?

4. Finally, the turn of Shimei (2:36). Why do you think he eventually disregarded Solomon's commands (2:39-46)?

5. What do we find Solomon doing as one of his first ventures in foreign diplomacy (3:1-3)? Was this against the Torah, the guide and constitution for Israel (Dt 17:16-17)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. "Never underestimate your opponent." Do you think that a lack of respect for Solomon's youth and inexperience may have caused Solomon's adversaries to act as they did?

2. Were Solomon's actions vengeful or was the king simply cementing an orderly transition? Or perhaps a bit of both?

3. How had Joab helped David? How had he hurt him? Romans 2:4 says "God's kindness leads you towards repentance." Does the story of Joab show that God allows much time for people to examine their ways and to repent (2Sa 3:30-39)?

4. Can you see evidence of God's grace in your own life?

SOLOMON RULES

After the death of his father David, Solomon moved swiftly to deal with threats to the stability of his kingdom. Ironically, the greatest threat to the unity of the kingdom would later prove to be Solomon himself.

Adonijah executed

The fourth of David's sons, Adonijah had attempted to make himself king before David's death. Even afterwards, Adonijah proved he was still a threat by asking Solomon for permission to marry David's female attendant, Abishag. Such a marriage would have been symbolic of taking royal power.

Abiathar banished

Abiathar and Zadok shared the high priesthood under David. But Abiathar had joined in Adonijah's conspiracy. Abiathar's removal from the priesthood constituted the prophesied end of the descendants of Eli in the priesthood (1Sa 2:31-35).

Joab executed

Although Joab, David's nephew, was a loyal commander of the Army, he had conspired with Adonijah. He had also murdered two of David's other commanders, Abner and Amasa (also David's nephew), a crime David did not punish during his lifetime. David charged Solomon to "deal with him."

Shimei confined to Jerusalem

Shimei, a relative of Saul, had cursed David at the time of Absalom's rebellion. David instructed Solomon to dispense justice to Shimei. Solomon ordered Shimei never to leave Jerusalem, under penalty of death. But Shimei ignored the order, to pursue some escaped slaves, resulting in his execution.

DAY 4

Make a Wish

1 Kings 3:4-28

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever had a wealthy friend or relative offer you a “blank check” in some way?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. The New Testament says that a double-minded person is essentially unstable (Jas 1:6-8). How did Solomon’s actions demonstrate this fatal flaw at the beginning of his reign (vs. 1-3)?

2. What happened during Solomon’s visit to Gibeon (vs. 4-15)? Was this a good beginning? Did Solomon seem to be looking for guidance and to have a concern for the people under him?

3. Next follows the drama of the baby and the two prostitutes (vs. 16-27). What is the result of Solomon’s judgment (v. 28)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Martin Luther wrote that “a wise prince is a rare bird.” Do you agree?

2. How are New Testament believers supposed to regard kings and those in authority (1Ti 2:1-2)?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The fact that Solomon felt such a commitment as **God’s servant** and as ruler of God’s people is more than window-dressing. It was the Israelite ideal that the nation’s true King was God and that all power in Israel ultimately derived from him (2Sa 23:2-4). “The kingdom is the Lord’s” was an early and popular Israelite affirmation. Every king was judged by the **keeping of God’s law**, “doing what God requires”—a common expression in the Hebrew text. The king was the executor of the law but not the source of law. That was reserved for God alone. The **high places** mentioned in chapter 3 were most likely local shrines that could be used for the worship of Yahweh but were often in some tension with the official worship at the Temple. Some of them allowed idolatrous practices and were thus condemned as early as the time of Moses (Dt 7:5; 12:3). Many Bible scholars see Solomon’s reign as the beginning of a new period of laxity that led to the high places becoming synonymous with abomination.*

*“Then the king said, ‘Bring me a sword.’
So they brought a sword for the king. He
then gave an order: ‘Cut the living child in two
and give half to one and half to the other.’”*

1 Kings 3:24-25



Artwork by Mike Wimmer

Everything in its Place

1 Kings 4:1-21

OPENING
up to the Word

Does the act of being organized improve productivity at work, or do you think it's more trouble than it's worth?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Some of the people named in verses 1-6 also served in David's administration—Zadok, Benaiah, Abiathar, for example. How important do you think this continuity of responsibility was for Solomon's reign?

2. Solomon reorganized the internal arrangement of the kingdom quite extensively (v. 7). These twelve sub-divisions did not strictly follow the older tribal divisions of the country.

3. One reason for these innovations was the desire for efficient taxation to pay for Solomon's vast projects. This resulted in new bureaucratic arrangements. Note that Adoniram in verse 6 was in charge of the forced labor. Had David used this approach?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What is your attitude toward government and bureaucratic agencies? Does this chapter strengthen or undermine your opinions?

2. Note Paul's comment in 1 Corinthians 14:40. Are you an orderly person? Do you consider orderliness a virtue?

WINDOW
on the Word

***Ben-Geber**, mentioned in verse 13, refers to the area we know today as Jordan. The area was settled and conquered by David. Solomon's attempt to annex this into Israelite territory shows the centralizing tendencies of his reign, a trend that would lead to the discontent that would later split the kingdom. Note the phrase "**Judah and Israel**" (v. 20). Some commentators take this, and the fact that Judah does not appear to be mentioned as an administrative district, to imply that Judah was exempt from taxation and other burdens.*

When Money Met Brains

DAY 6

1 Kings 4:22-34

What was the most extravagant function you have ever attended? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not?

1. How well-supplied was Solomon's court (vs. 22-23)? "Thirty cors of fine flour and sixty cors of meal." A *cor* was a measure of six bushels. Fine flour was a luxury item, yet Solomon and his retinue needed 180 bushels of it every day.
2. What colorful expression is used to depict the nation's peace and stability (v. 25)? See also Deuteronomy 8:8 and Micah 4:4.
3. Were military matters neglected (vs. 26-28)? The "four thousand stalls for chariot horses" met the needs of 1,400 chariots (10:26). The latter reference is more precise—archaeologists have concluded that each chariot needed two horses plus additional storage.
4. To what and whom was Solomon's wisdom contrasted (4:29-31)?
5. How many proverbs and songs did he collect or compose (vs. 32)? Was his knowledge encyclopedic in scope (vs. 33-34)?

1. There is an old adage: "If you wish for peace, you must prepare for war." Do you agree?
2. Who is the wisest person you know? A friend? A pastor? A relative? Can you remember seeking advice in a critical situation?

*The name **Solomon** is practically synonymous with **wisdom**. Two extensive collections in the book of Proverbs are credited to him (Pr 10:1-22:16; 25:1-29:27). The Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes are also attributed to him though the final form of these books may have come much later. The ancients often collected wisdom in books of proverbs, folk-tales, acrostics, songs, dialogues, riddles and formal instructions. With his 3,000 proverbs, only 582 of which are recorded in the Bible, Solomon is said to have surpassed them all.*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

RESOURCES FOR THE TEMPLE

Human resources

according to 1 Kings 5 and 2 Chronicles 2

30,000 workers to cut timber and quarry stone in Lebanon	Conscripted from Israelites.
70,000 carriers	Conscripted from gentiles living in Israel.
80,000 stonecutters	Conscripted from gentiles living in Israel.
3,600 foremen	

Materials

according to 1 Kings 5 and 1 Chronicles 22 and 28

Refined Gold	110 tons from David's treasuries.
Refined Silver	260 tons from David's treasuries.
Gold	3,940 tons.
Silver	37,875 tons.
Bronze	"Beyond measure." (675 tons is listed from other contributors, while David's contribution is unmeasured).
Iron	"Beyond measure." (3,750 tons is listed from other contributors, while David's contribution is unmeasured).
White limestone	Probably the main building material, from quarries in Israel and Lebanon. No amount specified in scripture.
Onyx	No amount specified in scripture.
Turquoise	No amount specified in scripture.
Marble	No amount specified in scripture.
Other fine stones	No amount specified in scripture.
Lumber	Cedar, pine or cypress, alnum, and olive wood, mostly from Lebanon.

A Little Help From His Friends

DAY 7

1 Kings 5:1-18

How talented are your friends? What are their special skills or spiritual gifts?

1. Why did David tell Hiram, king of Tyre, that God would not allow David to build the Temple of God (vs. 1-3)?
 2. Timber was not plentiful in Israel. How did Solomon solve that problem (vs. 4-12)?
 3. Note the phrase “forced labor” (vs. 13-14). This slave labor must have been drawn from the non-Israelite population, since a Hebrew was forbidden to enslave a fellow citizen (1Ki 9:20-23; Lev 25:39).
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1. What is the largest creative project you have been involved with? How long did it take to complete?
 2. Some scholars note that the centralization of wealth that would anger the Hebrew prophets centuries later began in Solomon’s reign. What did Jesus have to say about wealth and prosperity (Mt 6:19-24)? Have you reflected on the dangers of being obsessed with “things”?
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*The name **Hiram** is Phoenician in origin, possibly deriving from Ahiram (Nu 26:38) meaning, “my brother is exalted.” The mention of Hiram in the narrative helps us connect Solomon and Israel to the wider perspective of world history, for the Phoenicians of Tyre and Sidon are well-known to historians. Their trading ventures reached as far as Britain and down to the equatorial regions of Africa. Hiram’s reign has been dated from 979 to 955 B.C. thus helping to establish 971-931 B.C. as a good estimate for the reign of Solomon.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

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WINDOW

on the Word