FIRST KINGS

Chapter 5

*Preparations for Building the Temple*

**When Hiram king of Tyre heard that Solomon had been anointed king to succeed his father David, he sent his envoys to Solomon, because he had always been on friendly terms with David. 2 Solomon sent back this message to Hiram: 3 “You know that because of the wars waged against my father David from all sides, he could not build a temple for the Name of the Lord his God until the Lord put his enemies under his feet. 4 But now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side, and there is no adversary or disaster. 5 I intend, therefore, to build a temple for the Name of the Lord my God, as the Lord told my father David, when he said, ‘Your son whom I will put on the throne in your place will build the temple for my Name.’ 6 “So give orders that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me. My men will work with yours, and I will pay you for your men whatever wages you set. You know that we have no one so skilled in felling timber as the Sidonians. ” 7 When Hiram heard Solomon’s message, he was greatly pleased and said, “Praise be to the Lord today, for he has given David a wise son to rule over this great nation.” 8 So Hiram sent word to Solomon: “I have received the message you sent me and will do all you want in providing the cedar and pine logs. 9 My men will haul them down from Lebanon to the sea, and I will float them in rafts by sea to the place you specify. There I will separate them and you can take them away. And you are to grant my wish by providing food for my royal household.” 10 In this way Hiram kept Solomon supplied with all the cedar and pine logs he wanted, 11 and Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat as food for his household, in addition to twenty thousand baths,  of pressed olive oil. Solomon continued to do this for Hiram year after year. 12 The Lord gave Solomon wisdom, just as he had promised him. There were peaceful relations between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty. 13 King Solomon conscripted laborers from all Israel—thirty thousand men. 14 He sent them off to Lebanon in shifts of ten thousand a month, so that they spent one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor. 15 Solomon had seventy thousand carriers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hills, 16 as well as thirty-three hundred foremen who supervised the project and directed the workmen. 17 At the king’s command they removed from the quarry large blocks of quality stone to provide a foundation of dressed stone for the temple. 18 The craftsmen of Solomon and Hiram and the men of Gebal cut and prepared the timber and stone for the building of the temple.**

**5:1** *Hiram king of Tyre.* Hiram ruled over Tyre c. 978–944 b.c. He may have also served as co-regent with his father Abibaal as early as 993. Before Solomon was born, Hiram provided timber and workmen for the building of David’s palace (see 2Sa 5:11). (CSB)

**5:3** *he could not build a temple.* Although David was denied the privilege of building the temple, he did make plans and provisions for its construction (see 1Ch 22:2–5; 28:2; cf. also Ps 30 title). (CSB)

**5:4** *rest.* Described here as “no adversary or disaster.” God’s promises to his people (see Ex 33:14; Dt 25:19; Jos 1:13, 15) and to David (2Sa 7:11) have now been fulfilled (see 8:56), so that the Israelites are free to concentrate their strength and resources on building their Great King’s royal house (see note on 2Sa 7:11). (CSB)

**5:5** *Name.* Signifies God’s revealed character or self-revelation as a person (see, e.g., 8:16; Ex 20:24; Dt 12:5; 2Sa 6:2; 7:13). (CSB)

*as the Lord told my father David.* See 2Sa 7:12–13; 1Ch 22:8–10. (CSB)

**5:6** *So give orders.* A more detailed account of Solomon’s request is found in 2Ch 2:3–10. (CSB)

*cedars of Lebanon.* Widely used in the ancient Near East in the construction of royal houses and temples. (CSB)

**5:7** *Praise be to the Lord*. In polytheistic cultures it was common practice for the people of one nation to recognize the deities of another nation (see 10:9; 11:5) and even to ascribe certain powers to them (see 2Ki 18:25; see also 2Ch 2:12). (CSB)

**5:9** *place you specify.* Joppa (2Ch 2:16; see note on 1Ki 3:1). (CSB)

*providing food for my royal household.* Provision of food for Hiram’s court personnel appears to cover only the cost of the wood itself. In addition, Solomon would have to provide for the wages of the Phoenician laborers (v. 6). Comparison of v. 11 with 2Ch 2:10 indicates that besides wheat and olive oil for Hiram’s court, Solomon also sent barley and wine for labor costs. Hiram may have sold some of these provisions in order to pay the laborers. (CSB)

**5:11** *twenty thousand cors of wheat.* See NIV text note. By way of comparison, Solomon’s court received 10,950 cors of flour and 21,900 cors of meal on an annual basis (see 4:22). Solomon’s whole grain payment to Hiram of 20,000 cors of wheat and 20,000 cors of barley (2Ch 2:10) would probably yield about 26,666 cors of refined flour and meal, or about 20 percent less than the requirements of Solomon’s own court. (CSB)

**5:13** *conscripted laborers.* See notes on 9:15; 2Sa 20:24. Resentment among the people toward this sort of forced labor eventually led to a civil uprising and the division of Solomon’s kingdom immediately after his death (12:1–18). (CSB)

**5:15** *seventy thousand carriers and eighty thousand stonecutters.* Conscripted from the non-Israelite population that David had subdued and incorporated into his kingdom (see 2Ch 2:17–18). (CSB)

*hills.* The limestone hills of Palestine where the stone was quarried. (CSB)

**5:16** *thirty-three hundred foremen*. 1Ki 9:23 refers to 550 supervisors. If these are two different categories of supervisory personnel, the total is 3,850 men. 2Ch 2:2 refers to 3,600 foremen, and 2Ch 8:10 speaks of 250 supervisors, which again yields a total of 3,850 men in a supervisory capacity. (CSB)

**5:17** *large blocks of quality stone.* For the size of these stones see 7:10. Transportation of such stones to Jerusalem would require enormous manpower. (CSB)

**5:18** *men of Gebal.* See NIV text note; see also Eze 27:9. (CSB)