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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:
A2298 ~ Peace in Israel.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Early in his reign of Israel, King Solomon divided up Israel into 12 regions, each having its own governor. These regions didn't correspond to the 12 tribal allocations of land but rather, seemed to depend on the wealth and population density of different parts of Israel. Solomon required each region to provide his household with food for one month per year. With 30 oxen and 100 sheep required each day, along with other wild animals, fine flour in large quantities, and barley and straw for his 12,000 horses, you can begin to see the result of the prophet Samuel's earlier warning to the Israelites that having an earthly king would take from the people.

However, the people seemed happy enough to make such efforts to feed the king's huge household, as there was peace and safety in the land. Solomon ruled over all the territory that David's men had captured, from the border of Egypt to the Euphrates River. He also received tribute money from the conquered kingdoms within this area too. Solomon controlled the various trade routes throughout the region and collected taxes from this trade.

Hiram, king of Tyre, had been on friendly terms with Solomon's father, David, and he'd helped build David's palace. Hiram also provided David with many of the materials needed for the construction of the Temple of God. When Hiram heard that Solomon had become king, he desired to keep the friendship between the two kingdoms going.

The major item for the Temple that Solomon requested from Hiram was cedar wood cut from the famed cedar forests of Lebanon, which was highly valued timber used for major construction projects in ancient Middle East. Solomon also wanted to hire the skilled woodsmen of the city of Sidon, which was located in present-day Lebanon, to expertly cut down the trees.

Hiram sent back a reply to Solomon in 1st Kings, Chapter 5. A longer version of his reply is recorded in 2nd Chronicles, Chapter 2. Although Hiram was a non-Israelite who worshipped many other pagan gods, he started out by acknowledging Solomon's God. He said: "Praise to the Lord who made heaven and earth." Then he agreed to all of Solomon's requests. In return, he asked Solomon to provide food items for his royal household. Each year Solomon supplied Hiram with wheat and olive oil. This agreement later turned into a royal treaty.

Solomon established a forced labour group of 30,000 men from the Canaanites still living in Israel. He sent them under Israelite supervisors to Lebanon on a rotational basis of one month away and two months at home. Their job was to help prepare the timber and stones needed for the foundation of the Temple. But Solomon didn't make any Israelites into forced labourers, because they were his servants, officers and men of war.

When the regions supplying Solomon's food requirements found that they also had to provide for all the workmen on the Temple building project as well, the contributions became increasingly burdensome to the people and eventually, fuelled discontent and division in the kingdom after Solomon's death.

Solomon started to build the Temple of God in the 4th year of his reign. It took 7 years to build and altogether, Solomon's building projects including palaces and God's Temple, took a total of 20 years. The workmen prepared all the stones and pieces of timber to the right sizes first. Then they brought them to Mount Moriah and fitted them together onto the Temple site without using hammers, axes or any other form of iron tools there.

All the details that went into making the Temple are listed in 1st Kings, Chapter 6, and 2nd Chronicles, chapters 3 to 5. Do we need to know all these details? The temple that Solomon made was built according to the instructions that his father David had received from God. David had given Solomon the plans for the entrance hall, its houses, treasuries, upper and inner rooms, and the place of the mercy seat. Surrounding the Temple itself was an inner courtyard for the priests, and beyond that was a large court.

Going back in time, when God gave Moses the details of the earthly Tent of Meeting, the Biblical record tells us that Moses was told four times to make the sanctuary according to the pattern that was shown to him on the mountain. What Moses saw was a tent with two apartments and all its furnishings, and this is what he built – the Old Testament Tent of Meeting. But this doesn't mean that there is a similar tent in heaven.

The heavenly sanctuary is much greater, grander and more beautiful than any earthly tent or temple could ever be. What was shown to Moses and David were earthly models of God's heavenly sanctuary. These models were not miniature editions of the heavenly sanctuary, but earthly representations that Moses and David could build for the time and place in history in which they lived. God adapted what He had showed them to fit the circumstances for their particular times.

Therefore, there's not a tent or a temple of stone in heaven, but rather, a heavenly sanctuary made of heavenly material and in heavenly dimensions.

Even if we don't know exactly what the heavenly sanctuary looks like, we can nevertheless speak and proclaim what goes on in there. We know that Jesus ministers in the heavenly sanctuary and that by faith, we can come to the throne of God and receive His full mercy and forgiveness for anything we do wrong. This is a most important feature of this special place.

The New Testament church believed that after Jesus' ascension from earth and back into heaven, He has ministered on behalf of His followers in the very presence of God in the heavenly sanctuary, as recorded in the book of Acts, Chapter 7. In Hebrews, the Hebrews writer tried to turn the eyes of the Jewish Christians away from the ministry in the earthly temple and to the heavenly sanctuary that has a more perfect ministry by their own resurrected and ascended Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Solomon's temple was twice the size of the Tent of Meeting that Moses had made. It was about 90 feet or 30 metres long, 30 feet or 10 metres wide, and 45 feet or 15 metres high on the inside. It was divided into two rooms, with the Most Holy Place (or Holy of Holies) at the back where the Covenant Box was to be placed. The entrance porch had a bronze column that was 27 feet or 9 metres tall each side of the steps, but they didn't support any roof. Instead, they were given the names 'Jachin' and 'Boaz' to indicate that it was only by God's strength that the nation of Israel had been established. When the city of Jerusalem was finally conquered by the Babylonians, these two bronze pillars were broken up and the metal they were made of was taken to Babylon.

Do we need to know all the details written in the Bible about the furnishings overlaid with gold? Each article was arranged by the Lord for a purpose. David, Solomon and the people contributed so much wealth to the building of the Temple that the Bible tells us that silver became so common that it was considered of very little value. However, following the destruction of Solomon's Temple some 300 years later by the Babylonians, a smaller temple was built by Zerubbabel when the Jewish people returned after 70 years of exile in Babylon. That smaller temple was completely renovated and expanded by King Herod in the time of our Lord Jesus.

Zerubbabel's Temple took 46 years for the Israelites to get into good presentation but in AD 70, this temple was destroyed by the Romans.

Today, the Jewish people are preparing to build a 3rd temple on the Jewish Mount in Jerusalem; which is also known as the Mount Moriah site. The Jews have prepared the utensils to be used in the temple, the clothing for the priests to wear and even the altar to be placed in it. There is only the difficulty of the land there currently being occupied. In Daniel, Chapter 9, it's prophesied that the Antichrist will make an agreement with the Jews for the building of the 3rd temple. However, after 3½ years, the Antichrist will then set himself up in the Holy of Holies section that is reserved for God alone, to demand that he be worshipped as though he is himself a god. This desecration of the 3rd temple will then be followed by severe persecution for the Israelites who are living in the country at that time.

Following the prophesied 7-year tribulation period of God's wrath, which is God's righteous anger poured out on the earth for all unrepentant people's sins, the Lord Jesus will come back to earth in a 2nd coming. When He does, He will fight and defeat all of Israel's enemies. All of Christ's faithful followers, however, who have lived their lives for Him and spent those 7 years of Tribulation in heaven with Him, will return to earth with Jesus. That means that we who love the Lord might get to see the 3rd temple that the Jews build.

We should note an important difference between this 3rd temple and a Christian church building. A temple is not designed to have worshippers inside: they are always kept outside in a large court. A Christian church, however, is designed to have worshippers meeting together inside in intimate fellowship with God. This difference came about because Jesus opened up a way for ordinary worshippers to come back into God's presence undefiled, and holy and acceptable to be in God's holy presence – just like the Old Testament priests had been authorised to do. Indeed, every believer in Christ has been made into a priest with full rights to enter into God's sanctuary.

Old Testament priests were chosen by God, and were not self-appointed. These priests were chosen for a purpose: to serve God with their lives by offering up animal sacrifices on behalf of people's sins. But now Christ, our living High Priest, has made one sacrifice for the sin of the world for all time. When Jesus died a tortuous death on the cross that He did not deserve, the thick Jewish temple veil that covered the doorway into the Holy of Holies area was torn in two from top to bottom by God Himself. God did this to indicate that the Old Testament priesthood was no longer necessary by Christ's perfect, complete and last sacrifice needed for dealing with sin. Now people could come directly to God through the great High Priest, Jesus Christ Himself. There's no further need for earthly mediators between God and people as there had existed in the Old Testament priesthood in the Bible. Jesus established a new covenant and new way to approach God – through Himself and Him only!

Let us not forgot what it says in Hebrews, Chapter 4, Verse 14: "Let us, then hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we have a great High Priest who has gone into the very presence of God – Jesus, the Son of God."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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