

FIRST KINGS

Chapter 9

The Lord Appears to Solomon

When Solomon had finished building the temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and had achieved all he had desired to do, ² the LORD appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. ³ The LORD said to him: “I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there. ⁴ “As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, ⁵ I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.’ ⁶ “But if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, ⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. ⁸ And though this temple is now imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, ‘Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’ ⁹ People will answer, ‘Because they have forsaken the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why the LORD brought all this disaster on them.’ ”

9:1–9 The Lord appears to Solomon to make clear that the terms of the covenant applied also to the temple. Its stone and wood would not automatically guarantee the permanency of its builder’s dynasty or magically ensure the nation’s safety. The temple would “become a heap of ruins” (v 8) if it no longer was the place where the chosen kingdom of priests expressed their undivided devotion to the Lord. King and people would be cut off from the land (v 7) if they thought that the habitation of God’s name made them immune to sin’s consequences (Jer 7:1–4; 22:8). (TLSB)

9:1 *When Solomon had finished.* At the earliest this would be in the 24th year (4 + 7 + 13 = 24) of Solomon’s reign—946 B.C. (see 6:1, 37–38; 7:1; 9:10). (CSB)

9:2 *appeared to Solomon a second time.* Cf 3:4–15.(TLSB) *he had appeared to him at*

Gibeon. See 3:4–15. (CSB)

C 6 mi NW of Jerusalem. (TLSB)

9:3 *putting my Name there forever.* See 8:10–13. (CSB)

Hbr term denotes a long, unknown time; eventually, the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC. Cf Ezk 10. (TLSB)

My eyes and my heart will always be there. See 8:29. (CSB)

9:4–5 *if you walk before me in integrity of heart ... I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever. See 8:25 and note on 2:4. The Lord reemphasizes to Solomon the importance of obedience to the covenant in order to experience its blessings rather than its curses. This was particularly necessary as Solomon's kingdom grew in influence and wealth, with all the potential for covenant-breaking that prosperity brought (see Dt 8:12–14, 17; 31:20; 32:15). (CSB)*

9:6 *serve other gods and worship them. See 11:4–8. (CSB)*

Emphasizing the First Commandment (Ex 20:3). (TLSB)

9:7 *cut off. God's judgment would include the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. (TLSB)*

a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. See the covenant curse in Dt 28:37. (CSB)

9:8 *they. Foreigners settling the land. See notes, 2Ki 17:24, 26. (TLSB)*

9:9 *that is why the LORD brought all this disaster on them. See Dt 29:22–28; Jer 22:8–30. (CSB)*

In God's dwelling with His people, there is in His Law a relentless logic of cause and effect. The Law in all of Scripture describes God's reaction to people's sinful response to Him. This reasoning is basic in the preaching of the prophets (e.g., Amos). Jesus applied the same reasoning to Jerusalem and the temple of His day when He predicted their destruction (Mt 23:37–24:2; cf Gal 6:7–8).

9:1–9 God appears to Solomon a second time to emphasize the promises and the demands of the covenant with David's house. God's promises of blessing and threats of powerful judgment proclaim the Law and the Gospel. The Law and Gospel still apply to us today. The Law calls us to repentance and faithfulness; the Gospel calls us to true faith, blessing, and comfort for now and for eternity. • Lord, keep us from turning away from You and from bringing judgment upon ourselves. Forgive our sins, renew us, and strengthen us for a life of service. In the Savior's name. Amen. (TLSB)

Solomon's Other Activities

¹⁰ At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon built these two buildings—the temple of the LORD and the royal palace—¹¹ King Solomon gave twenty towns in Galilee to Hiram king of Tyre, because Hiram had supplied him with all the cedar and pine and gold he wanted. ¹² But when Hiram went from Tyre to see the

towns that Solomon had given him, he was not pleased with them. ¹³ “What kind of towns are these you have given me, my brother?” he asked. And he called them the Land of Cabul, a name they have to this day. ¹⁴ Now Hiram had sent to the king 120 talents of gold. ¹⁵ Here is the account of the forced labor King Solomon conscripted to build the LORD’s temple, his own palace, the supporting terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer. ¹⁶ (Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He had set it on fire. He killed its Canaanite inhabitants and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon’s wife. ¹⁷ And Solomon rebuilt Gezer.) He built up Lower Beth Horon, ¹⁸ Baalath, and Tadmor in the desert, within his land, ¹⁹ as well as all his store cities and the towns for his chariots and for his horses—whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled. ²⁰ All the people left from the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (these peoples were not Israelites), ²¹ that is, their descendants remaining in the land, whom the Israelites could not exterminate—these Solomon conscripted for his slave labor force, as it is to this day. ²² But Solomon did not make slaves of any of the Israelites; they were his fighting men, his government officials, his officers, his captains, and the commanders of his chariots and charioteers. ²³ They were also the chief officials in charge of Solomon’s projects—550 officials supervising the men who did the work. ²⁴ After Pharaoh’s daughter had come up from the City of David to the palace Solomon had built for her, he constructed the supporting terraces. ²⁵ Three times a year Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar he had built for the LORD, burning incense before the LORD along with them, and so fulfilled the temple obligations. ²⁶ King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea. ²⁷ And Hiram sent his men—sailors who knew the sea—to serve in the fleet with Solomon’s men. ²⁸ They sailed to Ophir and brought back 420 talents of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

9:10–28 See map No. 5 at the end of the Study Bible. (CSB)

9:11 *Solomon gave twenty towns in Galilee to Hiram king of Tyre.* Comparison of vv. 10–14 with 5:1–12 suggests that during Solomon’s 20 years of building activity he became more indebted to Hiram than anticipated in their original agreement (see note on 5:9), which had provided for payment for labor (5:6) and wood (5:10–11). From vv. 11, 14 it is evident that in addition to wood and labor Solomon had also acquired great quantities of gold from Hiram. It appears that Solomon gave Hiram the 20 towns in the Phoenician-Galilee border area as a surety for repayment of the gold. 2Ch 8:1–2 indicates that at some later date when Solomon’s gold reserves were increased, perhaps after the return of the expedition to Ophir (1Ki 9:26–28; 10:11) or the visit of the queen of Sheba (10:1–13), he settled his debt with Hiram and recovered the 20 towns held as collateral. (CSB)

Solomon was able to pay for Phoenician timber with wheat and oil (5:10–11). But he reimbursed Hiram for “120 talents of gold” (millions of dollars; v 14) by pawning 20 Israelite cities that were later redeemed (2Ch 8:1–2). (TLSB)

9:13 *Cabul*. “Unproductive land.” Hiram may have been haggling to profess dissatisfaction with the exchange value of the cities. (TLSB)

9:15 *forced labor*. Non-Israelite slave labor of a permanent nature (in contrast to the temporary conscription of Israelite workmen described in 5:13–16). *supporting terraces*. Probably for Solomon’s expansion of Jerusalem on the ridge north from David’s city (see note on 2Sa 5:9). (CSB)

For the temple, his royal edifices, and walls of his capital. They were also used to fortify strategically located cities (v 19). (TLSB)

Hazor. Solomon’s building activity at Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer was intended to strengthen the fortifications of these ancient, strategically located towns (Solomonic gates, probably built by the same masons, have been found at all three sites). Hazor was the most important fortress in the northern Galilee area, controlling the trade route running from the Euphrates River to Egypt. (CSB)

Megiddo. Another fortress along the great north-south trade route; it commanded the pass through the Carmel range from the plain of Jezreel to the coastal plain of Sharon. *Gezer*. See note on 3:1. (CSB)

Stables have been found at various excavated levels. See map, p 534. Archaeologists agree that remains at Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, and other nearby locations are examples of Solomonic architecture. (TLSB)

9:16–17 At the mention of Gezer, the account is interrupted in order to report how this city, c 20 mi NW of Jerusalem, came into Solomon’s possession. (TLSB)

9:16 *Pharaoh*. Possibly Siamun (c 979–959 BC). (TLSB)

killed its Canaanite inhabitants. Although Joshua had killed the king of Gezer at the time of the conquest (Jos 10:33; 12:12), the tribe of Ephraim had been unable to drive out its inhabitants (Jos 16:10; Jdg 1:29). (CSB)

9:17 *Gezer*. Six-chambered gates have been discovered here, including benches and a drainage system. (TLSB)

Lower Beth Horon. Located about eight miles northwest of Jerusalem at a pass giving entrance to the Judahite highlands and Jerusalem from the coastal plain. (CSB)

C 12 mi NW of Jerusalem, it guarded an important road from the plain of the Great Sea into the hill country of Judah. (TLSB)

9:18 *Baalath*. To be identified with either the Bealoth of Jos 15:24 located to the south of Hebron in the tribe of Judah or the Baalath southwest of Beth Horon in the tribe of Dan (Jos 19:44). (CSB)

Apparently the city by that name assigned to the tribe of Dan (Jsh 19:44). It controlled another approach into Judah almost directly west of Jerusalem. (TLSB)

Tadmor. See NIV text note; see also 2Ch 8:4; Eze 47:19. (CSB)

Hbr text note has “Tadmor” (cf 2Ch 8:4), a city 150 mi NE of Damascus and later known as Palmyra. Tamar—which may be the better reading—was southwest of the Salt Sea (Ezk 47:19 48:28). (TLSB)

9:19 *store cities*. Grain reserves. Cf Ex 1:11. (TLSB)

9:20 *Amorites ... Jebusites*. See Dt 7:1; 20:17; see also notes on Ge 10:15–18; 13:7; 15:16; 23:9; Jos 5:1; Jdg 3:3; 6:10; 2Sa 21:2. (CSB)

9:22 *Solomon did not make slaves of any of the Israelites*. See note on v. 15. (CSB)

The Israelites’ service was a levy, or form of taxation. Some of them became officials of various kinds. (TLSB)

9:23 *550 officials*. See note on 5:16. (CSB)

9:24–25 *own house*. In connection with Solomon’s building operations, this short aside tells of Pharaoh’s daughter’s transfer from temporary quarters in the city of David to her own house, which Solomon completed before he built the Millo, and Solomon’s sacrifice in the finished temple. (TLSB)

9:25 *Three times a year*. On the occasion of the three important annual festivals: the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles (see Ex 23:14–17; 2Ch 8:13). (CSB)

On the occasion of the three important annual feasts: Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Harvest, Feast of Ingathering (Booths; Ex 23:14–17). (TLSB)

9:26–27 With the help of Hiram’s experienced Phoenician seamen, Solomon engaged in maritime enterprises on the Red Sea, to which he had access through the land of Edom, a vassal state. From the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba, the fleet of merchant ships sailed to Ophir (v 28). (TLSB)

9:26 *ships*. Used in a large trading business that brought great wealth to Solomon’s court (see v. 28; 10:11). (CSB)

Ezion Geber. Located at the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba (see 22:48; Nu 33:35; Dt 2:8). *Red Sea*. The Hebrew for this term, normally read as *Yam Suph* (“sea of reeds”; see NIV text note), refers to the body of water through which the Israelites passed at the time of the exodus (see notes on Ex 13:18; 14:2). It can also be read,

however, as *Yam Soph* (“sea of (land’s) end”), a more likely reading when referring to the Red Sea, and especially (as here) to its eastern arm (the Gulf of Aqaba). (CSB)

9:28 *Ophir*. A source for gold (2Ch 8:18; Job 28:16; Ps 45:9; Isa 13:12), almugwood and precious stones (10:11), and silver, ivory, apes and baboons (10:22). Its location is disputed: Southeastern Arabia, southwestern Arabia, the northeastern African coast (in the area of Somalia), India and Zimbabwe have all been suggested. If Ophir was located in Arabia, it was probably a trading center for goods from farther east as well as from east Africa. But the three-year voyages of Solomon’s merchant vessels (10:22) suggest a more distant location than the Arabian coast. (CSB)

Source of gold and other valuables (10:11–12). See note, Jb 22:24. Gold is rarely found in ancient Israelite sites, having been used as tribute to greater powers (Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon). (TLSB)

420 talents. C 16 tons. (TLSB)

9:10–28 Hiram feels cheated in his agreement with Solomon, and the king’s glorious building projects include forced labor. The record of Solomon’s acts are a mixture of faithful service to God and sinful greed and self-service. Our lives, too, are a record of sin along with our attempts to serve the Lord. That is why we daily need renewal at the cross of Jesus, in whom we are a new creation, dedicated to godly service. • Lord of the nations, teach us to place our trust not in earthly governments and rulers, but in Your perfect power and love. In Jesus’ name. Amen. (TLSB)