

This week we hear another story of Call – that of Solomon, the son of David, who succeeded him as the king of Israel. Last we learned of David's vocation and being chosen by God, despite him seeming to be the least likely candidate among both his brothers – and the people. Here we learn that David was not able to build a "house" or Temple for the worship of God during his reign because of near constant warfare. This was both with neighboring adversaries, as well as with supporters of Saul and even a civil war with David's son Absalom attempted a coup. David dreamed of building a permanent installation, a palatial house for God whose presence resided in the **TENT OF MEETING** or Tabernacle – the movable place for worship which had traveled with the Israelites from their post-exodus wandering in the desert. With growing political power and economic strength, the monarchy seeks to have God sojourn among them in the capital city; yet until now Yahweh the LORD has always emphasized divine freedom, movement, migration and action.

Our story is part of the larger story of the building of the Temple. 1 Kings 5 tells of the preparations. Chapters 6 and 7 tell of the construction. Chapter 8 tells of the dedication of the Temple, which is then made operational.

King Hiram of Tyre had been an ally and partner of Solomon's father, David. ¹¹ King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar trees, and carpenters and masons who built David a house. ¹² David then perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel." 2 Samuel 5:11

Prophecy about David: (*house*) 2 Samuel 7:1-17 retells the prophecy spoken by the prophet Nathan about David as his coronation. It refers to the enjeux of the future Temple and how Solomon understood it.

¹ Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ² the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ...

⁴ But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: ⁵ Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: *Are you the one to build me a house to live in?* ⁶ *I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle.* ⁷ Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸ Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹ and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ *He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.* ¹⁴ I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.

SCRIPTURES FOR

SUNDAY 10.29.2017

1 Kings 5:1-5; 8:1-13; John 2:13-22

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

1 Kings 5:1-5

¹ Now King Hiram of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father; for Hiram had always been a friend to David. ² Solomon sent word to Hiram, saying, ³ "You know that my father David could not build a house for the name of the Lord his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet. ⁴ But now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune. ⁵ So I intend to build a house for the name of the Lord my God, as the Lord said to my father David, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, shall build the house for my name.'

1 Kings 8:1-13

¹ Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the ancestral houses of the Israelites, before King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion. ² All the people of Israel assembled to King Solomon at the festival in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. ³ And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests carried the ark. ⁴ So they brought up the ark of the Lord, the **TENT OF MEETING**, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the priests and the Levites brought them up. ⁵ King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had

READING BETWEEN THE LINES: Our selection jumps from 1 Kings 5:6 to 8:1; parts of which are key in knowing what was going on.

THE COST OF OPPULENCE: The construction of the Temple is done with the help and generosity of Gentiles (King Hiram, for example), it involves costly materials, the best possible, deemed worthy of God. This includes in particular cedar and cypress (the best woods) from Lebanon – 1 Kings 5:8-12. This is done with the awareness that “cedar” has long been taken as a social symbol of affluence that invites a sense of autonomy from God, a self-indulgence and indifference to the needs of the poor. See Isaiah 2:13; Isaiah 37:24; Jeremiah 22:14-15; and Zephaniah 2:14. It’s a sign of opulence and extravagance, indicating a move away from genuine neighborly care towards multinational trade, and an impersonal economic structure. Solomon assumed such heavy debts in this construction that he is forced to pay off King Hiram by handing over 20 towns in the Galilee (1 Kings 9:11).

WORK DONE BY SLAVE LABOR. Solomon uses a “huge work force” to accomplish this great construction. In straight language, he uses conscripted, or slave labor, 1 Kings 5:13-17. Solomon seems to forget the history of his people who were slaves in Egypt, the very thing Yahweh delivered them from in the Exodus, calling them to a life of God-centered freedom. Solomon becomes a new Pharaoh. See Exodus 5:10-14

CHANGING ISRAEL’S IDENTITY TO BIT IN WITH OTHER NATIONS. Solomon enters into a trade pact with foreign powers to acquire these costly, foreign materials, a self-indulgent cooperation with a world of trade and commerce viewed as fundamentally alien to the covenant identity of Israel. “Like Tyre, Israel becomes a global economic power in which the needs and yearnings of citizen-subjects are completely submerged in ambitious royal schemes.” (Bruggemann) See Isaiah 2:6-22 & 58:2-3, 13.

Questions for the practice of Examen & Contemplation

- What shimmers for you in these passages?
- What image most speaks to you today?
- How does the story of the call of Solomon intersect your own story?
- How have you misunderstood or failed to grasp God’s call in your life?
- Talk with God about your own times of being lost in how you perceive God, perceive yourself; or perceive others? How are you in need of being re-formed into the creation that God made you to be? How does Jesus show you the Way to that?

assembled before him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered.

⁶ Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁷ For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim made a covering above the ark and its poles. ⁸ The poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside; they are there to this day. ⁹ There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses had placed there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the Israelites, when they came out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁰ And when the priests came out of the holy place, a **cloud** filled the house of the Lord, ¹¹ so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for **the glory of the Lord** filled the house of the Lord.

¹² Then Solomon said,

“The Lord has said that he would dwell in thick darkness.

¹³ *I have built you an exalted house,
a place for you to dwell in forever.”*

John 2:13-22

¹³ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵ Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!” ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” ¹⁸ The Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” ²⁰ The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?” ²¹ But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.