

Exegetical Notes – 1 Kings 5:1-18

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1 Kings 5:1-18

Verse 1

¹ 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.

- See 2 Samuel 5:11. David and Hiram, king of Tyre, had always been on good terms. Hiram had supplied materials for the building of David's palace. When Hiram heard that Solomon had succeeded his father David as Israel's king he sent envoys to Solomon to congratulate him.

Verses 2-6

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."

- Solomon wrote back to Hiram reminding him that David had intended to build a Temple for YHWH in Jerusalem but had been prevented from doing so because Israel was at war throughout David's reign.
- But now, the kingdom was at peace and Solomon intended to build a Temple for YHWH as God had promised David that David's son would do so.
- Solomon requested that cedar logs be cut for him by Hiram's men and sent to Jerusalem. Solomon told Hiram that he would pay for the logs and the

wages of the men who cut them down. He promised to send workers from Israel to help Hiram's men fell the trees.

Verses 7-9

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 juniper logs. ⁹ My men will haul them down from Lebanon to the Mediterranean Sea, and I will float them as 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."

- Hiram was pleased to honor Solomon's request and offered a plan to transport the requested logs to Lebanon where Solomon would take possession of them and carry them to Jerusalem.
- He requested that Solomon supply his household with food as payment for the logs.

Verses 10-12

¹⁰ In this way Hiram kept Solomon supplied with all the cedar and juniper 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.

- These verses define the contract between Hiram and Solomon. Solomon would supply Hiram 120,000 bushels of wheat and 120,000 gallons of olive oil annually for as long as Solomon required logs from Hiram.
- Both Solomon and Hiram honored the agreement between them so there was no cause for war among them.

Verses 13-18

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 workers.¹⁷ At the king's command they removed from the quarry large blocks of high-grade stone to provide a foundation of dressed stone for the temple.¹⁸ The craftsmen of Solomon and Hiram and workers from Byblos cut and prepared the timber and stone for the building of the temple.

- Solomon conscripted 30,000 men to work on the materials needed to build the Temple. He divided the force into three groups of 10,000 each. The workers spent one month at work in Lebanon and two months in Israel each shift. This was forced labor which later caused Solomon to be unpopular (see I Kings 12:4, 8-11).
- Solomon also had 70,000 carriers who carried stone to Jerusalem and 80,000 stone cutters who cut the stones. There were 3,300 foremen who directed the carriers and the stone cutters. This means that there were 183,300 men who worked on collecting materials for building the Temple. This was a huge workforce.
- An international work force from Israel, Tyre, and Gebal (modern Byblos), cut and prepared the timber and prepared the stone for the Temple.

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