

The Essentials: The Church

Session 3: TEMPLE

1 Kings 6:1-19

Opening Collect

Together: Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Read: 1 Kings 6:1-19

Opening Thought

The instructions for the building of Solomon's temple are profoundly detailed and lavish. The structure was made of hewn stone, imported Cedar, and 20 tons of Gold. It was 120 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 200 feet tall. No expense was spared. All these details intimate the importance of having a place where human beings can come into God's actual presence. We Christians certainly may wonder, "can't we worship God anywhere now? Isn't he with us all the time? Why all of the incredible expense?" And yet, Scripture seems to affirm two things at once—the centrality of access to God in particular places of corporate worship where beauty and architecture matter deeply, *and* our ability to have fellowship with God personally because of what Christ has done on the cross and through the presence of his Holy Spirit. Today we'll discuss the temple and how the presence of God marks and defines the church.

Discussion:

1. Discuss the size and construction of the Temple. Do any of the details surprise you? What might this say about architecture, art, and beauty for the life of the church?
2. Read Acts 2:37-47. Notice v. 46 describes the early Christians gathering *both* in the Temple and in one another's homes. Do you tend to think of the church more as a people or a place? Or both? Discuss.
3. One of the primary activities that occurred in the temple was ritual sacrifice. The people of God would sacrifice to come into closer proximity with God. Does anything in this passage remind you of the language or liturgical movements within our own worship at St. George's?
4. The ultimate purpose of the temple was to provide a location to be in God's presence—humanity's true calling and delight. How do you think about receiving that privilege? Where do you experience God's presence most?

Check in and Closing Prayer

1 Kings 6:1-19

In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month, he began to build the house of the Lord. ²The house that King Solomon built for the Lord was sixty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high. ³The vestibule in front of the nave of the house was twenty cubits long, equal to the width of the house, and ten cubits deep in front of the house. ⁴And he made for the house windows with recessed frames. ⁵He also built a structure against the wall of the house, running around the walls of the house, both the nave and the inner sanctuary. And he made side chambers all around. ⁶The lowest story was five cubits broad, the middle one was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad. For around the outside of the house he made offsets on the wall in order that the supporting beams should not be inserted into the walls of the house.

⁷When the house was built, it was with stone prepared at the quarry, so that neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron was heard in the house while it was being built.

⁸The entrance for the lowest story was on the south side of the house, and one went up by stairs to the middle story, and from the middle story to the third. ⁹So he built the house and finished it, and he made the ceiling of the house of beams and planks of cedar. ¹⁰He built the structure against the whole house, five cubits high, and it was joined to the house with timbers of cedar.

¹¹Now the word of the Lord came to Solomon, ¹²“Concerning this house that you are building, if you will walk in my statutes and obey my rules and keep all my commandments and walk in them, then I will establish my word with you, which I spoke to David your father. ¹³And I will dwell among the children of Israel and will not forsake my people Israel.”

¹⁴So Solomon built the house and finished it. ¹⁵He lined the walls of the house on the inside with boards of cedar. From the floor of the house to the walls of the ceiling, he covered them on the inside with wood, and he covered the floor of the house with boards of cypress. ¹⁶He built twenty cubits of the rear of the house with boards of cedar from the floor to the walls, and he built this within as an inner sanctuary, as the Most Holy Place. ¹⁷The house, that is, the nave in front of the inner sanctuary, was forty cubits long. ¹⁸The cedar within the house was carved in the form of gourds and open flowers. All was cedar; no stone was seen. ¹⁹The inner sanctuary he prepared in the innermost part of the house, to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord.

