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Introduction

In the four hundred and eightieth year from the exodus, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, and in the second month, he laid the foundations of the temple; the length sixty cubits, the breadth twenty, and the height thirty cubits; besides the porch, which was twenty cubits in length, and ten cubits in height, 1 Kings 6:1-3. A description of its different external parts, 1 Kings 6:4-10. God's promise to Solomon, 1 Kings 6:11-13. Description of its internal parts and contents, vv. 14-36. Temple finished in the eighth month of the eleventh year of Solomon's reign, being seven years in building, 1 Kings 6:37, 1 Kings 6:38.

Verse 1

In the four hundred and eightieth year - The Septuagint has the four hundred and fortieth year. It need scarcely be noticed, that among chronologists there is a great difference of opinion concerning this epocha. Glycas has 330 years; Melchior Canus, 590 years; Josephus, 592 years; Sulpicius Severus, 588; Clemens Alexandrinus, 570; Cedrenus, 672; Codomanus, 598; Vossius and Capellus, 580; Serarius, 680; Nicholas Abraham, 527; Maestlinus, 592; Petavius and Valtherus, 520. Here are more than a dozen different opinions; and after all, that in the common Hebrew text is as likely to be the true one as any of the others.

The month Zif - This answers to a part of our April and May; and was the second month of the sacred year, but the eighth month of the civil year. Before the time of Solomon, the Jews do not appear to have had any names for their months, but mentioned them in the order of their consecutive occurrence, first month, second month, third month, etc. In this chapter we find Zif and Bul; and in 1 Kings 8:2, we find another, Ethanim; and these are supposed to be borrowed from the Chaldeans; and consequently this book was written after the Babylonish captivity. Before this time we find only the word Abib mentioned as the name of a month, Exodus 13:4. Whether there were any others at that time, or whether Abib was really intended as the name of a month, we cannot absolutely say. The present names of the Hebrew months are: - Tisri, answering to a part of September and October, Marchesvan, Cisleu, Tebeth, Shebat, Adar, Nisan, Ijar, Sivan, Tamuz, Ab, and Elul.

Verse 2

The length thereof was threescore cubits - A cubit, according to Bishop Cumberland, is 21 inches, and 888 decimals, or 1 foot, 9 inches, and 888 decimals. According to this

d Yds.Ft.Inch.

d

d The length, 60 cubits, was 3615.28

d

d The breadth, 20 cubits, was 1205.76

d

d The height, 30 cubits, was 1808.64

d

d This constituted what was called the temple or house, the house of God, etc. But, besides this, there were courts and colonnades, where the people might assemble to perform their devotions and assist at the sacrifices, without being exposed to the open air. The court surrounded the temple, or holy place, into which the priests alone entered. Sometimes the whole of the building is called the temple; at other times that, the measurement of which is given above. But as no proper account can be given of such a building in notes; and as there is a great variety of opinion concerning the temple, its structure, ornaments, etc., as mentioned in the books of Kings and Chronicles, in Ezekiel, and by Josephus; and as modern writers, such as Vilalpandus, Dr. Lightfoot, and Dr. Prideaux, professing to be guided by the same principles, have produced very different buildings; I think it best to hazard nothing on the subject, but give that description at the end of the chapter which Calmet with great pains and industry has collected: at the same time, pledging myself to no particular form or appearance, as I find I cannot give any thing as the likeness of Solomon's temple which I could say, either in honor or conscience, bears any affinity to it. For other particulars I must refer the reader to the three large volumes of Vilalpandus, Dr. Lightfoot's Works, and to the Connections of Dr. Prideaux.

Verse 4

Windows of narrow lights - The Vulgate says, fenestras obliquas, oblique windows; but what sort of windows could such be?

The Hebrew is  $\text{חֲלֹנֹת שֶׁקֻּפִּים אֲטֻמִּים}$  (challoney shekuphim atumim), windows to look through, which shut. Probably latticed windows: windows through which a person within could see well; but a person without, nothing. Windows, says the Targum, which were open within and shut without. Does he mean

windows with shutters; or, are we to understand, with the Arabic, windows opening wide within, and narrow on the outside; such as we still see in ancient castles? This sense our margin expresses. We hear nothing of glass or any other diaphanous substance. Windows, perhaps originally windore, a door to let the wind in, in order to ventilate the building, and through which external objects might be discerned.

#### Verse 7

The house - was built of stone - It appears that every stone was hewn and squared, and its place in the building ascertained, before it came to Jerusalem: the timbers were fitted in like manner. This greatly lessened the trouble and expense of carriage. On this account, that all was prepared at Mount Lebanon, there was neither hammer, axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the building; nothing except mallets to drive the tenons into the mortises, and drive in the pins to fasten them, was necessary: therefore there was no noise. But why is this so particularly marked? Is it not because the temple was a type of the kingdom of God; and the souls of men are to be prepared here for that place of blessedness? There, there is no preaching, exhortations, repentance, ears, cries, nor prayers; the stones must be all squared and fitted here for their place in the New Jerusalem, and, being living stones, must be built up a holy temple for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

#### Verse 9

Covered the house with beams and boards of cedar - The Eastern custom is very different from ours: we ceil with plaster, and make our floors of wood; they make their floors of plaster or painted tiles, and make their ceilings of wood. But it may not be improper to observe that, in ancient times, our buildings were somewhat similar. Westminster Hall is a proof of this.

#### Verse 11

The word of the Lord came to Solomon - Some think that this is the same revelation as that mentioned 1 Kings 9:2, etc., which took place after the dedication of the temple: but to me it appears different; it was a word to encourage him while building; to warn him against apostasy, and to assure him of God's continued protection of him and his family, if they continued faithful to the grace which God had given.

#### Verse 15

The walls of the ceiling - See the note on 1 Kings 6:9.

#### Verse 19

The oracle he prepared - See the description of the temple at the end of this chapter, 1 Kings 6:38 (note).

#### Verse 22

The whole house he overlaid with gold - It is impossible to calculate this expense, or the quantity of gold employed in this sacred building.

#### Verse 26

The height of the one cherub was ten cubits - Concerning the cherubs, their form, etc., see my note on Exodus 25:18 (note). The height of each cherub was about eighteen feet and three inches.

#### Verse 36

Three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams - Does not this intimate that there were three courses of stone, and then one course of timber all through this wall? Three strata of stone and one stratum of timber, and so on. If so, could such a building be very durable? This is also referred to in the succeeding chapter, 1 Kings 7:11; and as both the temple and Solomon's house were built in the same manner, we may suppose that this was the ordinary way in which the better sort of buildings were constructed. Calmet thinks that to this mode of building the prophet alludes, Habakkuk 2:11: The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. But it should be observed that this was in the inner court, and therefore the timber was not exposed to the weather. The outer court does not appear to have been built stratum super stratum of stone and wood.

#### Verse 38

In the eleventh year - was the house finished - It is rather strange that this house required seven years and about six months to put all the stones and the timbers in their places, for we have already seen that they were all prepared before they came to Jerusalem; but the ornamenting, gilding, or overlaying with gold, making the carved work, cherubim, trees, flowers, etc., must have consumed a considerable time. The month Bul answers to a part of our October and November, as Zif, in which it was begun, answers to a part of April and May. The dedication did not take place till the following year, the twelfth of Solomon, because then, according to Archbishop Usher, the jubilee happened.

So was he seven years in building it - Properly seven years and six months; but the Scripture generally expresses things in round numbers.

Diana's temple at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world. It is said that almost all Asia was employed in the building of it for about two hundred years; but it was certainly more extensive than the temple at Jerusalem, for it may be justly questioned, notwithstanding the profusion of gold, silver, precious stones, etc., employed in the temple of Solomon, whether it cost any thing like the money expended on the temple of Diana.

Pliny informs us, Hist. Nat., lib. xxxvi., cap. 12, that, in order to build one of the pyramids in Egypt, no less than three hundred and sixty thousand men were employed for the space of twenty years. But neither was the temple any such work as this. We may also observe that the temple was never intended to hold a vast concourse of people; it was only for the service of the Lord, and the priests were those alone who were employed in it. The courts, chambers, and other apartments, were far more extensive than the temple itself; it was never designed to be a place to worship in, but a place to worship at. There God was known to have a peculiar residence, and before him the tribes came, and the priests were a sort of mediators between him and the people. In short, the temple was to the Jews in the promised land what the tabernacle was to the Hebrews in the wilderness; the place where God's honor dwelt, and whither the people flocked to pay their adoration.

Solomon laid the foundation of the temple in the year of the world 2992, before Christ 1008, before the vulgar era, 1012; and it was finished in the year of the world 3000, and dedicated in 3001, before Christ 999, before the vulgar era 1003; 1 Kings 8:1 etc.; 2 Chronicles 5:1; 2 Chronicles 7:1; 2 Chronicles 8:1 etc. The place that was pitched on for erecting this magnificent structure was on the side of Mount Sion called Moriah. Its entrance or frontispiece stood towards the east, and the most holy or most retired part was towards the west. The author of the first book of Kings, and of the second of Chronicles has chiefly made it his business to describe the temple properly so called, that is the sanctuary, the sanctum, and the apartments belonging to them, as also the vessels, the implements, and the ornaments of the temple, without giving any description scarcely of the courts and open areas, which, however, made a principal part of the grandeur of this august edifice.

But Ezekiel has supplied this defect by the exact plan he has delineated of these necessary parts. Indeed it must be owned that the temple as described by Ezekiel was never restored after the captivity of Babylon, according to the model and the mensuration that this prophet has given of it. But as the measures he sets down for the sanctum and the sanctuary are, within a small matter, the same as those of the temple of Solomon; and as this prophet, who was himself a priest, had seen the first temple; it is to be supposed that the description he gives us of the temple of Jerusalem is the same as that of the temple of Solomon.

The ground-plot upon which the temple was built was a square of six hundred cubits, or twenty-five thousand royal feet; Ezekiel 45:1 etc. This space was encompassed with a wall of the height of six cubits, and of the same breadth. Beyond this wall was the court of the Gentiles, being fifty cubits wide. After this was seen a great wall, which encompassed the whole court of the children of Israel. This wall was a square of five hundred cubits. The court of Israel was a hundred cubits square, and was encompassed all round with magnificent galleries supported by two or three rows of pillars. It had four gates or entrances; one to the east, another to the west, a third to the north, and the fourth to the south. They were all of the same form and largeness, and each had an ascent of seven steps. The court was paved with marble of divers colors, and had no covering; but the people in case of need could retire under the galleries that were all round about. These apartments were to lodge the priests in, and to lay up such things as were necessary for the use of the temple. There were but three ways to come in, to the east, to the north, and to the south, and they went to it by an ascent of eight steps. Before, and over against the gate of the court of the priests, in the court of Israel, was erected a throne for the king, being a magnificent alcove, where the king seated himself when he came into the temple. Within the court of the priests, and over against the same eastern gate, was the altar of burnt-offerings, of twelve cubits square, according to Ezekiel 43:16, or of ten cubits high and twenty broad, according to 2 Chronicles 4:1. They went up to it by stairs on the eastern side.

Beyond this, and to the west of the altar of burnt-offerings was the temple, properly so called, that is to say, the sanctuary, the sanctum, and the porch of entrance. The porch was twenty cubits wide and six cubits deep. Its gate was fourteen cubits wide. The sanctum was forty cubits wide and twenty deep. There stood the golden candlestick, the table of shew-bread, and the golden altar, upon which the incense was offered. The sanctuary was a square of twenty cubits. There was nothing in the sanctuary but the ark of the covenant, which included the tables of the law. The high priest entered here but once a year, and none but himself was allowed to enter. Solomon had embellished the inside of this holy place with palm trees in relief, and cherubim of wood covered with plates of gold, and in general the whole sanctuary was adorned, and as it were overlaid, with plates of gold.

Round the sanctum and sanctuary were three stories of chambers, to the number of thirty-three. Ezekiel makes them but four cubits wide; but the first book of Kings, 1 Kings 6:6, allows five cubits to the first story, six

to the second, and seven to the third.

Since the consecration or dedication of the temple by Solomon in the year of the world 3001, this edifice has suffered many revolutions, which it is proper to take notice of here.

In the year of the world 3033, before Christ 967, before the vulgar era 971, Shishak, king of Egypt, having declared war with Rehoboam, king of Judah, took Jerusalem, and carried away the treasures of the temple; 1 Kings 14:25, 1 Kings 14:26; 2 Chronicles 12:1-9.

In 3146, Jehoash, king of Judah, got silver together to go upon the repairs of the temple; they began to work upon it in earnest in 3148, before Christ 852, before the vulgar era 856; 2 Kings 12:4, 2 Kings 12:5, and 2 Chronicles 24:7-9, etc.

Ahaz king of Judah having called to his assistance Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, against the kings of Israel and Damascus, who were at war with him, robbed the temple of the Lord of its riches to give away to this strange king, 2 Chronicles 28:21, 2 Chronicles 28:22, etc., in the year of the world 3264, before Christ 736, before the vulgar era 740, and not contented with this, he profaned this holy place by setting up there an altar like one he had seen at Damascus, and taking away the brazen altar that Solomon had made; 2 Kings 16:10-12, etc. He also took away the brazen sea from off the brazen oxen that supported it, and the brazen basins from their pedestals, and the king's throne or oratory, which was of brass. These he took away to prevent their being carried away by the king of Assyria. Nor did he stop here, but carried his wickedness so far as to sacrifice to strange gods, and to erect profane altars in all the corners of the streets of Jerusalem; 2 Chronicles 28:24, 2 Chronicles 28:25. He pillaged the temple of the Lord, broke the sacred vessels, and, lastly, shut up the house of God. This happened in the year of the world 3264, before Christ 736, before the vulgar era 740, to his death, which happened in 3278, before Christ 722, before the vulgar era 726.

Hezekiah, the son and successor of Ahaz, opened again and repaired the gates of the temple which his father had shut up and robbed of their ornaments; 2 Chronicles 29:3, 2 Chronicles 29:4, etc., in the year of the world 3278, before Christ 722, before the vulgar era 726. He restored the worship of the Lord and the sacrifices, and made new sacred vessels in the place of those that Ahaz had destroyed. But in the fourteenth year of his reign, 2 Kings 18:15, 2 Kings 18:16, in the year of the world 3291, before Christ 709, before the vulgar era 713, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, coming with an army into the land of Judah, Hezekiah was forced to take all the riches of the temple, and even the plates of gold that he himself had put upon the gates of the temple, and give them to the king of Assyria. But when Sennacherib was gone back into his own country, there is no doubt that Hezekiah restored all these things to their first condition.

Manasseh, son and successor of Hezekiah, profaned the temple of the Lord, by setting up altars to all the host of heaven, even in the courts of the house of the Lord; 2 Kings 21:4-7; 2 Chronicles 33:5-7; in the year of the world 3306, and the following years. He set up idols there, and worshipped them. God delivered him into the hands of the king of Babylon, who loaded him with chains, and carried him away beyond the Euphrates; 2 Chronicles 33:11, 2 Chronicles 33:12, etc.; in the year of the world 3328, before Christ 672, before the vulgar era 676. There he acknowledged and repented of his sins; and being sent back to his own dominions, he redressed the profanations he had made of the temple of the Lord, by taking away the idols, destroying the profane altars, and restoring the altar of burnt-offering, upon which he offered his sacrifices.

Josiah, king of Judah, labored with all his might in repairing the edifices of the temple, (2 Kings 22:4-6, etc.; 2 Chronicles 34:8-10; in the year of the world 3380, before Christ 620, before the vulgar era 624), which had been either neglected or demolished by the kings of Judah, his predecessors. He also commanded the priests and Levites to replace the ark of the Lord in the sanctuary, in its appointed place; and ordered that it should not any more be removed from place to place as it had been during the reigns of the wicked kings, his predecessors, 2 Chronicles 35:3.

Nebuchadnezzar took away a part of the sacred vessels of the temple of the Lord, and placed them in the temple of his god at Babylon, under the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah; 2 Chronicles 36:6, 2 Chronicles 36:7, in the year of the world 3398, before Christ 602, before the vulgar era 606. He also carried away others under the reign of Jehoiachin, 2 Chronicles 36:10; in the year of the world 3405, before Christ 595, before the vulgar era 599. Lastly, he took the city of Jerusalem, and entirely destroyed the temple, in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the year of the world 3416, before Christ 584, before the vulgar era 588; 2 Kings 25:1-3, etc.; 2 Chronicles 36:18, 2 Chronicles 36:19.

The temple continued buried in its ruins for the space of fifty-two years, till the first year of Cyrus at Babylon, in the year of the world 3468, before Christ 532, before the vulgar era 536. Then Cyrus gave permission to the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and there to rebuild the temple of the Lord, Ezra 1:1-3, etc. The following year they laid the foundation of the second temple; but they had hardly been at work upon it one year, when either Cyrus or his officers, being gained over by the enemies of the Jews, forbade them to go on with their work; Ezra 4:5; in the year of the world 3470, before Christ 530, before the vulgar era 534. After the death of Cyrus and Cambyses, they were again forbidden by the magian, who reigned after Cambyses, and whom the Scripture calls by the name of Artaxerxes; Ezra 4:7, Ezra 4:17, Ezra 4:18, etc.; in the year of the world 3483, before Christ 517, before the vulgar era 521. Lastly, these prohibitions being superseded, under the reign of Darius, son of Hystaspes, (Ezra 5:1; Ezra 6:14; Haggai 1:1, etc.; in the year of the world 3485, before Christ 515,



before the vulgar era 519), the temple was finished and dedicated four years after, in the year of the world 3489, before Christ 511, before the vulgar era 515, twenty years after the return from the captivity.

“This temple was profaned by order of Antiochus Epiphanes in the year of the world 3837. The ordinary sacrifices were discontinued therein, and the idol of Jupiter Olympus was set up upon the altar. It continued in this condition for three years; then Judas Maccabeus purified it, and restored the sacrifice and the worship of the Lord, 1 Maccabees 4:36; in the year of the world 8840, before Christ 160, before the vulgar era 164.

“Herod the Great undertook to rebuild the whole temple of Jerusalem anew, in the eighteenth year of his reign, and in the year of the world 3986; Joseph., Antiq., lib. xv., cap. 14. He began to lay the foundation of it in the year of the world 3987, forty-six years before the first passover of Jesus Christ, as the Jews observe to him by saying, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? John 2:20. This is not saying that Herod had employed six and forty years in building it; for Josephus assures us that he finished it in nine years and a half; Joseph., Antiq., lib. xv., cap. 14. But, after the time of this prince, they all continued to make some new addition to it; and the same Josephus tells us that they went on working upon it, even to the beginning of the Jewish war; Joseph., Antiq., lib. xx., cap. 8.

“This temple, built by Herod, did not subsist more than seventy-seven years, being destroyed in the year of the world 4073, of Christ 73, of the vulgar era 69. It was begun by Herod in 3987, finished in 3996, burnt and destroyed by the Romans in 4073.

“This temple of Herod was very different from that of Solomon, and from that which was rebuilt by Zerubbabel after the captivity. This is the description that Josephus has left us of it, who himself had seen it: -

“The temple, properly so called, was built sixty cubits high, and as many broad; but there were two sides of front, like two arms or shoulderings, which advanced twenty cubits on each side, which gave in the whole front a hundred cubits wide, as well as in height. The stones made use of in this building were white and hard, twenty-five cubits long, eight in height, and twelve in width; Joseph., de Bell., lib. vi., p. 917.

“The front of this magnificent building resembled that of a royal palace. The two extremes of each face were lower than the middle, which middle was so exalted that those who were over against the temple, or that approached towards it at a distance, might see it, though they were many furlongs from it. The gates were almost of the same height as the temple; and on the top of the gates were veils or tapestry of several colors, embellished with purple flowers. On the two sides of the doors were two pillars, the cornices of which were adorned with the branches of a golden vine, which hung down with their grapes and clusters, and were so well imitated, that art did not at all yield to nature. Herod made very large and very high galleries about the temple, which were suitable to the magnificence of the rest of the building, and exceeded in beauty and sumptuousness all of the kind that had been seen before.

“The temple was built upon a very irregular mountain, and at first there was hardly place enough on the top of it for the site of the temple and altar. The rest of it was steep and sloping: Joseph., de Bell., lib. vi., p. 915, *ἰμῖοι τῆς ἰῆς*; Antiq., lib. xv., c. 14. But when King Solomon built it, he raised a wall towards the east, to support the earth on that side; and after this side was filled up, he then built one of the porticoes or galleries. At that time this face only was cased with stone, but in succeeding times, the people endeavoring to enlarge this space, and the top of the mountain being much extended, they broke down the wall which was on the north side, and enclosed another space as large as that which the whole circumference of the temple contained at first. So that at last, against all hope and expectation, this work was carried so far that the whole mountain was surrounded by a treble wall. But, for the completing of this great work whole ages were no more than sufficient; and all the sacred treasures were applied to this use, that the devotion of the people had brought to the temple from all the provinces of the world. In some places these walls were above three hundred cubits high, and the stones used in these walls were some forty cubits long. They were fastened together by iron cramps and lead, to be able to resist the injuries of time. The platform on which the temple was built was a furlong square, or one hundred and twenty-five paces. • Thus far Calmet and Josephus.