

[R2054 : page 251]

THE TEMPLE WHICH SOLOMON BUILT.

– NOVEMBER 1. – 1 KINGS 5:1-12. –

THE important point of this lesson is very slightly related to, or expressed by, the verses chosen above. [R2054 : page 251]

The temple built by Solomon did not cover the largest area of ground, nor was it the most lofty and massive structure of ancient times. Many of the ancient temples were superior in these respects; yet this temple was probably richer in its ornamentation and more costly than any of the others, because of the large amount of gold used in its construction. The building itself was of white limestone, which in the sunlight would very strongly resemble white marble. The stone necessary for its construction abounds in the vicinity of the temple itself; indeed, under the city of Jerusalem are large caverns known as "Solomon's Quarries," from which it is supposed that the stones for the temple were quarried. Some very large stones, more or less imperfect, and possibly for that reason not used, are still to be seen in these quarries. The beams, inner walls, doors and roof of the temple were constructed of cedar and red sandalwood. These were all (roof included) completely overlaid with gold – not merely gilded with gold leaf, such as is now used, but covered with plates of gold about an eighth of an inch thick, which were fastened on with gold nails and bestudded with precious stones of various kinds. [R2054 : page 252]

The fact that some of the stones bear Phoenecian marks has led some to suppose that part of the stone for the temple was imported; but we think it more probable that Phoenecian workmen were employed in quarrying, stonedressing, etc., and used such marks as they were in the habit of using in their own country. So far as the record shows, only the timber, including "fir" for scaffolding, was imported; the cedar coming from Lebanon. The country of Palestine did not afford such timber as was necessary.

The apostles (in the New Testament), in referring to the Church, spoke of it as represented in the stones of which the temple was constructed, each member of the Church being a "living stone," and their faith and character being represented in the gold, silver and precious stones of the temple's adornment; but the wood of the temple is not used to symbolize Christians or their faith and character, because wood is perishable. The Apostle indicates that "wood, hay and stubble" have no place in the true temple, the Church (1 Cor. 3:12); and as we consider Solomon's temple, we find that the wood was merely used as a filler, that the symbol was the gold which covered the wood. The wood was merely used because of the impossibility of collecting such an immense quantity of gold as would have been necessary to make the roof and inner walls and doors of solid gold. In this view of the matter, the typical proprieties of Solomon's temple are preserved; symbolically it was of stone and gold only.

Not only were the materials of the temple typical, but the fact that many of these materials were gathered together before Solomon's reign was also typical, and in addition the peculiar preparation and fitting of the stones, etc. Each was shaped and fitted and marked for its particular place before the construction began. So in the antitype: each member of the true temple of God, which the greater than Solomon is about to construct – the glorious Church and Kingdom – each living stone, is fitted and prepared by the chiseling, polishing, etc., in the quarry of this present life, and thus prepared for the particular place which he is to occupy in the future development of God's great plan. And as, when the various stones and parts had all been prepared, the construction of Solomon's temple was speedily and noiselessly executed, "without the sound of a hammer," so, when all the living stones of the antitypical temple have been made ready under the supervision of the antitypical Solomon, this true temple of God will come together quickly, without noise or confusion, in the "first resurrection" of the "blessed and **page 252** holy" on whom the second death has no power.

For the typical significance of other features of the Tabernacle and Temple see our issue of May 15, page 113 and **TABERNACLE SHADOWS**.
