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King Solomon's Temple
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Solomon, the son of King David of Israel was born in 981 B.C. He inherited the throne from his father when he was just twenty years old. Solomon's greatest goal was the completion and realization of his father's dream of a mighty temple to Jehovah. Detailed plans had been drawn up by King David and passed on to his son to provide a suitable home for the Ark of the Covenant that contained the two stone tablets that God gave to Moses. The site chosen for this project was in the conquered region of Jebus, in the capital city of Jerusalem, at a place called Mount Moriah. It was here that Abraham had been prepared to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, to God. Being the holiest of ground, it was the obvious place to build the temple.

The new King Solomon did not have the means to implement his father's plan into action. His subjects were lacking the necessary skills required to build such an amazing temple; the Jewish people at that time were better known for their military prowess than their engineering skills. King Solomon turned to a good friend of his father's, Hiram, the Phoenician King of Tyre for assistance. Hiram's subjects the Tyrians and the Sidonians, were famous for their incredible skill and talent at architecture across Asia Minor. King Hiram's men cut the cedar and cyprus trees, required for this mammoth task from Mount Lebanon. The trees, 110 feet in height, were rolled down mountainsides where they were logged and pulled by oxen teams along 15 miles of road to the shoreline. Large rafts of logs were then prepared and hauled them by boat to Joppa, now known as Tel Aviv. From there, Solomon had 35 miles of good road constructed so that the logs could be hauled to Jerusalem. King Hiram also provided for 33,600 skilled workers in wood and stone to help with King Solomon's men. More importantly than men, wood or stone, however, King Hiram also sent to Solomon his most gifted architect, a master craftsman whose work in gold, silver bronze and iron was used to adorn and beautify the temple. His name was Hiram Abiff. In return for all of King Hiram's help, Solomon paid a yearly basket of 2,000 tons of wheat, 2,000 tons of barley, 88,000 gallons of olive oil and 88,000 gallons of wine.

Construction on the Temple began in 957 B.C. King Solomon himself oversaw the entire work process, assisted and advised in all matters by his two fellow Grand Masters of the Craft, King Hiram of Tyre and Hiram Abiff. There were 70,000 apprentice stone workers in the quarries around Jerusalem performing the core of the excavation, and a further 80,000 fellow crafts tasked with cutting the rough blocks into perfect polished building stones, or ashlar. Some 30,000 further craftsmen were dedicated to cutting and preparing the Lebanese cedar wood. To keep everything running smoothly, 3,300 overseers and 500 chief overseers monitored all the work. Solomon's role was to manage the combined workforce, oversee the payment of wages, keep the workers happy and motivated, settle disputes, and generally make sure things went smoothly. In order to make sure that everyone was treated fairly and that the workers were paid their fair dues, the workforce was divided into three large, ranked classes. These classes were based solely on the workmen's different degrees of skill and aptitude. With a combined total workforce of over 200,000 people, it was decided that identity rolls would prove too cumbersome. Instead, each of the classes of workers was taught a different set of signs and words by which they could identify themselves when they went to collect their wages.

Work on the temple was completed in seven years. The Book of the Work gives reference to the Three Great Pillars and their significance in the Junior Warden's lecture in the first degree and detailed descriptions of the temples construction in the Senior Warden's lecture in the second degree.

The completion of the temple marks the completed organization of Freemasonry. The Tyrian architects, who possessed great skill at architecture, gained the light of Solomon's wisdom and piety; the Jewish workers, whose piety was unquestioned, gained the cunning workmanship of their Tyrian brothers. Solomon's wisdom was so great that his moral code and techniques were embodied within every detail of his system for the organization of Masonry, encoded in symbol and sign.

Solomon's reign lasted 40 years, and when he died the glory and power of the Hebrew empire died with him, but the legacy of his teachings and wisdom remained. These precepts have survived down the centuries, worked within the Masonic Craft, to come down to us today, their teaching power still a powerful influence.

In conclusion, I leave you with this Quotation:

*"A person who has never made a mistake never tried anything new."
Albert Einstein*