

THE ONE YEAR BIBLE Reading for June 9:

1 Kings 5:1-6:38:

The actual building of the temple is addressed in chapters 5-7. Today's two chapters tell of Solomon making a treaty with Hiram of Tyre to supply cedar for the temple (5:1-12); the 30,000 Canaanites Solomon conscripted into forced labor (5:13-18; this passage must be compared with 9:15-23 to see that the forced labor of this chapter is comprised of Canaanites and not Israelites); and then the construction and dimensions of the temple (6:1-38). These chapters are significant in the history of the redemption of God's people because a permanent place for the ark and for the worship of God by His people shows the fulfillment of one of the reasons He brought them out of Egypt and into this land—namely that they may have rest from enemies and the ability to worship Him fully (cf. Deuteronomy 12). These promises, however, all look forward to a rest (Hebrews 4), land (Hebrews 11:14-16), and worship (Hebrews 9) which are yet to come. This future reference is also seen in that the holy of holies is a perfect cube (6:20), a phenomenon which points forward to the perfectly squared New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:16). There will come a day when all our existence is within the holy of holies, the realized and special presence of the LORD!

Like the tabernacle before it, so the temple depicts the need to approach God on His terms, by means of atonement in sacrifice and points to the ultimate sacrifice which will truly bring forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 10:1-10).

After reading these chapters we should give thanks to God that the temple where He resides now is us, His people, and that He has offered a once-for-all sacrifice of His Son to redeem us. Ask God to help you understand, appreciate, and grow in your knowledge of how that sacrifice graciously changes you.

Acts 7:1-29:

After Stephen had been arrested and false accusations brought against him, namely that he spoke against the temple and the law and said Jesus would destroy the temple and change the customs of Moses (6:8-15), the high priest asked Stephen about these charges (7:1). Stephen responds by recounting a history of Israel which highlights the continual disobedience and rebellion of their ancestors and cautions people from placing too much focus upon the current temple (7:2-53). At the end of his message he confronts these leaders with the reality that they have been just like their ancestors, for they have rejected God and the Righteous One He sent (Jesus) and they haven't really kept the Law. Stephen shows great courage here as he seeks to bring these men to an awareness of their sin and repentance. Instead, what happens is that they stoned him, an action they were not authorized to carry out under Roman law (54-60). Stephen, then, becomes the Church's first martyr.

In addition to setting the stage for the subsequent events in Acts and demonstrating for us a courageous and bold witness—an example we all should follow—the speech by Stephen teaches us a number of other truths: (1) Moses was forty years old when he fled Egypt and began his forty years in the wilderness prior to his call (23-30). (2) The term

ekklesia, normally translated “church” but here as “congregation” (38) refers to the people of God assembled together in the Old Testament (see also Hebrews 2:12; 12:23). The use of this term in the Greek Translation of the Old Testament to refer to God’s Old Covenant congregation stands behind its use to refer to the New Covenant people of God. (3) We see Saul (his Hebrew name. His Greek name was Paul) introduced as one who is in favor of the martyrdom (7:58; 8:1). This sets the stage for his subsequent conversion account in chapter 9. (4) We see that the followers of Jesus Christ become like Him, for Stephen prays a very similar prayer of forgiveness for his murderers (60) as Jesus did for His (see Luke 23). As such, we find that forgiveness is a mark of a genuine believer. (5) We learn that the death of a saint is not a permanent cessation of their bodily function. It is only temporary and thus referred to as sleep (60). Behind this stands the reality that Stephen’s body will be resurrected as was the body of his savior! So it will be with all who are in Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)!

Psalm 127:1-5:

This psalm teaches two important truths related to the family. First, though parents have great responsibility and though many important principles are set forth in Scripture for parenting, we must understand that all our efforts will be fruitless unless God is working in and behind and through all we do (1-2). He is the one who must make our parenting efforts fruitful. Second, children are a gift, a blessing from God (3-5).

Proverbs 16:28-30:

Here are reminders of how destructive dishonesty and violence are.