

1KINGS 9: 1 When Solomon had finished the building of the LORD's house, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do,

The Lord appears a second time to Solomon, and assures him that he had heard his prayer; and that he would establish his worship for ever in that temple, and him and his successors on the throne of Israel, provided he and they would keep his statutes and judgments, 1Kgs 9:1-5; but if they should transgress and forsake the Lord, then they should be cast off, the temple itself abandoned, and their enemies permitted to prevail over them, 1Kgs 9:6-9. Solomon having finished the temple and the king's house, about which he was employed twenty years, and having received assistance from Hiram king of Tyre, he gave him in return twenty cities in Galilee, with which he was not pleased, 1Kgs 9:10-14. Solomon's levies, buildings, and the persons employed, 1Kgs 9:15-23. Pharaoh's daughter comes to the city of David, 1Kgs 9:24. He sacrifices thrice a year at the temple, 1Kgs 9:25. Solomon's navy, and the gold they brought from Ophir, 1Kgs 9:26-28.

1KINGS 9: 2 the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon.

Verse 2

The Lord appeared to Solomon - The design of this appearance, which was in a dream, as that was at Gibeon, was to assure Solomon that God had accepted his service, and had taken that house for his dwelling-place, and would continue it, and establish him and his descendants upon the throne of Israel for ever, provided they served him with an upright heart; but, on the contrary, if they forsook him, he would abandon both them and his temple.

1KINGS 9: 3 The LORD said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your supplication, that you have made before me. I have made this house holy, which you have built, to put my name there forever; and my eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually.

1KINGS 9: 4 As for you, if you will walk before me, as David your father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and will keep my statutes and my ordinances;

1KINGS 9: 5 then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, according as I promised to David your father, saying, 'There shall not fail you a man on the throne of Israel.'

1KINGS 9: 6 But if you turn away from following me, you or your children, and not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but shall go and serve other gods, and worship them;

1KINGS 9: 7 then I will cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have made holy for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

Verse 7

A proverb and a by - word among all people - And so they are to the present; the unbelieving Jews, the stubborn, stiff-necked Jews, are words still in common use. They forsook the Lord, rejected his Christ, and are cast off, their temple destroyed, and they scattered over the face of the earth.

1KINGS 9: 8 Though this house is so high, yet shall everyone who passes by it be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land, and to this house?'

1KINGS 9: 9 and they shall answer, 'Because they abandoned the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold of other gods, and worshipped them, and served them. Therefore the LORD has brought all this evil on them.'"

Verse 9

Have taken hold upon other gods - When an indigent person claims the protection of a superior, he casts himself down before him, and lays hold of his feet; and this expression is frequently used when there is no prostration: I have taken hold of thy feet. When a person is called into the presence of the Burman monarch, he is said to go to the golden foot. - Ward's Customs.

1KINGS 9: 10 At the end of twenty years, in which Solomon had built the two houses, the LORD's house and the king's house

Verse 10

At the end of twenty years - He employed seven years and a half in building the temple, and twelve years and a half in building the king's house; see 1Kgs 7:1; 2Chr 8:1.

1KINGS 9: 11 (now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire), King Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.

Verse 11

Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities - It is very likely that Solomon did not give those cities to Hiram so that they should be annexed to his Tyrian dominions, but rather gave him the produce of them till the money was paid which he had advanced to Solomon for his buildings. It appears however that either Hiram did not accept them, or that having received the produce till he was paid, he then restored them to Solomon; for in the parallel place, 2Chr 8:2, it is said, The cities which Hiram had restored to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there. Some think that they were heathen cities which Solomon had conquered, and therefore had a right to give them if he pleased, as they were not any part of the land given by promise to the Israelites.

1KINGS 9: 12 Hiram came out of Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they didn't please him.

1KINGS 9: 13 He said, "What cities are these which you have given me, my brother?" He called them the land of Cabul to this day.

Verse 13

Called them the land of Cabul - Whether this epithet was given to this land by Hiram as a mark of disapprobation, or what is its proper meaning, the learned are not agreed. That there was a country of this name in the promised land in the time of Joshua, is evident enough from Jos 19:27, as it was one part of the boundary of the tribe of Asher; hence some interpret the word border or boundary, and so, the Septuagint understood it, for they have translated the Hebrew word *ḥay*, which signifies the same. The margin gives another meaning.

1KINGS 9: 14 Hiram sent to the king one hundred twenty talents of gold.

Verse 14

Sixscore talents of gold - This was the sum which Hiram had lent, and in order to pay this Solomon had laid a tax upon his people, as we afterward learn. The whole is very darkly expressed.

1KINGS 9: 15 This is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised, to build the LORD's house, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer.

Verse 15

This is the reason of the levy - That is, in order to pay Hiram the sixscore talents of gold which he had borrowed from him (Hiram not being willing to take the Galilean cities mentioned above; or, having taken them, soon restored them again) he was obliged to lay a tax upon the people; and that this was a grievous and oppressive tax we learn from 1Kgs 12:1-4, where the elders of Israel came to Rehoboam, complaining of their heavy state of taxation, and entreating that their yoke might be made lighter.

And Millo - This is supposed to have been a deep valley between Mount Sion and what was called the city of Jebus, which Solomon filled up, and it was built on, and became a sort of fortified place, and a place for public assemblies. - See Calmet.

1KINGS 9: 16 Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites who lived in the city, and given it for a portion to his daughter, Solomon's wife.

Verse 16

Pharaoh - had gone up, and taken Gezer - This city Joshua had taken from the Canaanites, Jos 10:33; Jos 12:12, and it was divided by lot to the tribe of Ephraim, and was intended to be one of the Levitical cities; but it appears that the Canaanites had retaken it, and kept possession till the days of Solomon, when his father-in-law, Pharaoh king of Egypt, retook it, and gave it to Solomon in dowry with his daughter.

1KINGS 9: 17 Solomon built Gezer, and Beth Horon the lower,

1KINGS 9: 18 and Baalath, and Tamar in the wilderness, in the land,

Verse 18

And Tadmor in the wilderness - This is almost universally allowed to be the same with the celebrated Palmyra, the ruins of which remain to the present day, and give us the highest idea of Solomon's splendor and magnificence. Palmyra stood upon a fertile plain surrounded by a barren desert, having the river Euphrates on the east. The ruins are well described by Messrs. Dawkes and Wood, of which they give fine representations. They are also well described in the ancient part of the Universal History, vol. i., p. 367-70. The description concludes thus: "The world never saw a more glorious city; the pride, it is likely, of ancient times, and the reproach of our own; a city not more remarkable for the state of her buildings and unwontedness of her situation than for the extraordinary personages who once flourished there, among whom the renowned Zenobia and the incomparable Longinus must for ever be remembered with admiration and regret."

1KINGS 9: 19 and all the storage cities that Solomon had, and the cities for his chariots, and the cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build for his pleasure in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

Verse 19

And all the cities of store - Though, by the multitude and splendor of his buildings, Solomon must have added greatly to the magnificence of his reign; yet, however plenteous silver and gold were in his times, his subjects must have been greatly oppressed with the taxation necessary to defray such a vast public expenditure.

1KINGS 9: 20 As for all the people who were left of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, who were not of the children of Israel;

1KINGS 9: 21 their children who were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel were not able utterly to destroy, of them Solomon raised a levy of bondservants to this day.

Verse 21

A tribute of bond-service - He made them do the most laborious part of the public works, the Israelites being generally exempt. When Sesostris, king of Egypt, returned from his wars, he caused temples to be built in all the cities of Egypt, but did not employ one Egyptian in the work, having built the whole by the hands of the captives which he had taken in his wars. Hence he caused this inscription to be placed upon each temple: - Ουδεις εγγωριος εις αυτα μεμοχθηκε.

No native has labored in these

Diodor. Sic. Bibl., lib. i., c. 56.

It appears that Solomon might with propriety have placed a similar inscription on most of his works.

1KINGS 9: 22 But of the children of Israel Solomon made no bondservants; but they were the men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots and of his horsemen.

1KINGS 9: 23 These were the chief officers who were over Solomon's work, five hundred fifty, who bore rule over the people who laboured in the work.

1KINGS 9: 24 But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David to her house which Solomon had built for her: then he built Millo.

1KINGS 9: 25 Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he built to the LORD three times a year, burning incense with them, on the altar that was before the LORD. So he finished the house.

Verse 25

Three times in a year did Solomon offer - These three times were:

1. The passover.
 2. The feast of pentecost.
 3. The feast of tabernacles.
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1KINGS 9: 26 King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion Geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.

Verse 26

A navy of ships - Literally, אֲנִי *oni*, a ship: in the parallel place, 2Chr 8:17, it is said that Hiram sent him אֲנִיּוֹת *oniyoth*, ships; but it does not appear that Solomon in this case built more than one ship, and this was manned principally by the Tyrians.

1KINGS 9: 27 Hiram sent in the navy his servants, sailors who had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon.

1KINGS 9: 28 They came to Ophir, and fetched from there gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.

Verse 28

And they came to Ophir - No man knows certainly, to this day, where this Ophir was situated. There were two places of this name; one somewhere in India, beyond the Ganges, and another in Arabia, near the country of the Sabaeans, mentioned by Job, Job 22:24 : Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust; and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. And Job 28:16 : It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. Calmet places this country at the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris.

But there are several reasons to prove that this was not the Ophir of the Bible, which it seems was so situated as to require a voyage of three years long to go out, load, and return. Mr. Bruce has discussed this subject at great length; see his Travels, vol. ii., chap. iv., p. 354, etc. He endeavors to prove

1. That Ezion-geber is situated on the Elanitic branch of the Arabian Gulf or Red Sea.
2. That Tharshish is Moka, near to Melinda, in the Indian Ocean, in about three degrees south latitude.
3. That Ophir lies somewhere in the land of Sofala, or in the vicinity of the Zimbeze river, opposite the island of Madagascar, where there have been gold and silver mines in great abundance from the remotest antiquity. And he proves,
4. That no vessel could perform this voyage in less than Three years, because of the monsoons; that more time need not be employed, and that this is the precise time mentioned in 1Kgs 10:22.
5. That this is the country of the queen of Sheba, or Sabia, or Azeba, who on her visit to Solomon, brought him one hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices and precious stones great store, 1Kgs 10:10. And that gold, ivory, silver, etc., are the natural productions of this country.

To illustrate and prove his positions he has given a map on a large scale, "showing the track of Solomon's fleet in their three years' voyage from the Elanitic Gulf to Ophir and Tharshish;" to which, and his description, I must refer the reader.