

**READ:** I Kings 5:1-5; 6:11-14 (NIRV)

Hiram was the king of Tyre... He heard that Solomon had become the next king after his father David. Hiram had always been David's friend. So Hiram sent his messengers to Solomon. Then Solomon sent a message back to Hiram. Solomon said, "As you know, my father David had to fight many battles. His enemies attacked him from every side. So he couldn't build a temple where the LORD his God would put his Name. That wouldn't be possible until the LORD had put his enemies under his control. But now the LORD my God has given me peace and rest on every side. We don't have any enemies. And we don't have any other major problems either. So I'm planning to build a temple. I want to build it for the Name of the LORD my God. That's what he told my father David he wanted me to do. He said, 'I will put your son on the throne in your place. He will build a temple. I will put my Name there.'"

A message came to Solomon from the LORD. The LORD said, "You are now building this temple. Follow my orders. Keep my rules. Obey all my commands. Then I will make the promise I gave your father David come true. I will do it through you. I will live among my people Israel. I will not desert them." So Solomon built the temple and finished it.

ENTER THE STORY:

God loved his people very much, and he wanted to live with them so they could be near him and worship him every single day, but there was one *HUGE* problem. God is holy, which means he is perfect. He has never done anything bad! His very presence is dangerous to people that have sinned, so in order for him to live with them, they had to build a special home with a very, very special room where *NOBODY* could go except when God allowed them to come inside. The first home they built for God was more like a tent that could be set up and taken down, but eventually, Solomon built God a permanent home called a temple. This temple was *BIG* and *BEAUTIFUL*, and the inside was covered in gold, so everything shimmered and sparkled. It was a perfect home for God!

When the temple was finished, a cloud filled with God's presence came down and filled up the special room they made for him, and everyone was speechless and in awe of God's glory. But, there was still only *ONE* person that could go inside God's special room *ONE* time a year on a special day. This went on for many, many years, but the people of Israel kept on sinning and making bad choices, and this made God sad, so God's presence rose up from the temple and left.

God still loved his people very much and wanted to live with them, but he had a BETTER way!

God would send a very special someone who would live among his people. This special someone wouldn't have to hide his glory in a cloud or keep it locked away in a special room. This person would live and walk among the people and show them God's glory face to face.

Do you know who this special someone is? It's Jesus!

Through Jesus, God's presence would come live among his people again. After Jesus' work on this earth was finished, he would go back to his Father in heaven, but he wouldn't leave us alone; he would send another helper... the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not live inside a temple or *AMONG* God's people. The Holy Spirit dwells inside our hearts making God's people living temples (*I Corinthians 6:20*). With God's Spirit dwelling inside of us, we can be sure that God's presence will always be with us, and he will never leave us or forsake us.

PRAY: God, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to dwell among us and show us what you are like, and thank you for giving us your Holy Spirit, so that we can always have your presence with us. Keep us close to you always. Amen.