

## 1 Kings 8 – Solomon’s Prayer of Dedication

When the temple was completed, Solomon gathered the elders of Israel, the representatives of all the tribes, to bring up the ark of the covenant from the tabernacle, which was in the City of David. The priests and Levites brought up the ark, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels to the temple. We read in v. 5 that Solomon and the congregation of Israel sacrificed so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered. The ark was placed in the Most Holy Place in the temple, and in v. 10 “when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord.”

Could you imagine the scene? Here are all the leaders of Israel, participating in a great worship service, offering sacrifices to God, as the priests and Levites are bringing the Ark of the Covenant and the holy furnishings into the temple of God, and as soon as the priests put the ark in its place, the glory of God filled the place so much that the priests could not continue their service. The overwhelming presence of God was too much for them.

Then King Solomon spoke (v. 12) “The Lord has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever.” Solomon recognizes this cloud as the same one that covered Mount Sinai when God gave the law to Moses, and the one which filled the tabernacle in the wilderness to show His presence with the people of Israel. The tabernacle was also called the tent of meeting. It wasn’t the dwelling place of God, but it was where He chose to meet with His people Israel, to show that He was in their midst. Now Solomon spoke of a building as the dwelling place of God. The presence of the cloud of shekinah glory indicated God’s acceptance of this house.

Solomon then turned to the people (v. 15) and said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth to David my father, saying, Since the day that I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there. But I chose David to be over my people Israel. Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. But the Lord said to David my father, Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart. Nevertheless, you shall not build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name. Now the Lord has fulfilled his promise that he made. For I have risen in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and I have built the house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. And there I have provided a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the Lord that he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

Solomon reminded the people of God’s faithfulness – “with his hand has fulfilled what he promised with his mouth...” This is a reason for us to worship. We can trust God in all that He says. He kept His covenant with the people of Israel, and He kept His covenant with David and Solomon. Based on that faithfulness of God, Solomon then prayed to God. (Read vs. 22-53)

I don’t think I can go over every detail of this prayer in the time we have this morning, but let’s look at a few key elements.

First, the uniqueness of God. There is no other like Him, in heaven above or on earth beneath. We’ve already addressed His faithfulness, and here Solomon says God keeps covenant and shows steadfast love to those who walk before Him with their whole heart. He is the Creator, sustainer of all things. He is

greater than all of creation. V. 27 asks, “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built!” God is truly beyond our comprehension, yet He has made Himself known to us, and desires our worship and our service.

The primary plea Solomon makes throughout the rest of the prayer is “hear our prayer.” At least 14x he expresses some form of this request. Verse 28, “have regard to the prayer of your servant”. Verse 30, “Listen to the plea of your servant and of your people...and when you hear, forgive.” This is the great need of mankind – to receive God’s forgiveness and help. Notice some of the contexts in which Solomon asks God to hear His people.

Verse 31 – “If a man sins against his neighbor...” Verse 33, “When your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you...” Verse 35, “When heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you...” Verse 37, “If there is famine in the land, if there is pestilence or blight or mildew or locust or caterpillar, if their enemy besieges them...” Verse 41, “When a foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, comes from a far country for your name’s sake...” Verse 44, “If your people go out to battle against their enemy...” Verse 46, “If they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin...yet if they turn their heart...” There is no situation when we don’t have the opportunity to turn toward and pray to God. He is our hope, our strong deliverer, our comforter, provider, and Savior. In each of the previous situations, we find the follow-on: “Then hear in heaven...” Our God hears the prayers of His people, and acts in response.

Solomon ended his prayer, then rose and blessed the people with this benediction (v. 56-61): “Blessed be the Lord who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant. The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers. May he not leave us or forsake us, that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules, which he commanded our fathers. Let these words of mine, with which I have pleaded before the Lord, be near to the Lord our God day and night, and may he maintain the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires, that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no other. Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the Lord our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.” Amen