

“Concealed and Revealed”
1 Kings 8:1-10
(Preached at Trinity, November 8, 2020)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Chapters 6-7** were devoted to Solomon's fifteen-year building project of the Temple and the royal palace. Now, as we enter **Chapter 8** our attention is shifted to Solomon's dedication of the Temple.
There's an orderly structure to the chapter.
 - Verses 1-13** – the joyous celebration and offering of sacrifices
 - Verses 14-21** – Solomon's rehearsing of God's covenant faithfulness
 - Verses 22-53** – Solomon's prayer of dedication
 - Verses 54-61** – more rehearsing of God's covenant faithfulness
 - Verses 62-66** – more celebration and offerings
2. These opening verses begin with Solomon calling a solemn assembly in Jerusalem as they prepare to transfer the Ark of the covenant from the tabernacle erected by David into the completed Temple.
There was great celebration and **Verse 5** tells us the sacrifices that were offered were beyond number.
3. **2 Chronicles** records that there was singing and the sound of musical instruments, including 120 trumpets.
2 Chronicles 5:12-13 NAU - "all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and kinsmen, clothed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps and lyres, standing east of the altar, and with them one hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets ¹³ in unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice to praise and to glorify the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the LORD *saying*, "He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting," then the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud,"
4. It was a glorious time of worship and praise.
Finally, the priests brought the Ark into the inner sanctuary. The Ark is the focus here. The word is used eight times in the first 9 verses.
5. The main purpose of the Tabernacle/Temple was a visible representation of the essence of God. Tonight, I want us to explore God's instruction as we gaze upon the Temple.

I. God is transcendent

- A. Transcendence is a term used to describe the otherness of God
1. God dwells in a realm totally apart from time and space
 2. He is incomparable – there is nothing in our experience that can be likened unto God. Although God provides us with many anthropomorphisms, God is vastly different from humanity. He is without body, parts, or passions.
 - a. God is a person but most often we define personhood as that which distinguishes a human being from an animal. A dog is not a person.
 - b. God is a person in terms of being a self-conscious, rational being but God is vastly different from a human personality. God has perfect consciousness, infinite intellect, eternal self-existence.
 - c. The human person can be divided into various elements of personality. We possess body and soul, will and emotions. God cannot be divided.
God “is.” He is immutable. He is infinite, boundless, unaffected by anything outside Himself.
 3. God is incomprehensible. Our Confession states that God ultimately can only be comprehended by Himself.
LBC 2:1 – “The Lord our God is but one only living and true God; whose subsistence is in and of Himself, infinite in being and perfection; whose essence cannot be comprehended by any but Himself”
 4. This passage describes the transcendence of God in two ways.
- B. We can see God’s transcendence with the symbol of the cherubim
1. The cover of the Ark was adorned with two cherubim.
Exodus. 25:18-22 NAU - "You shall make two cherubim of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. ¹⁹ "Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim *of one piece* with the mercy seat at its two ends. ²⁰ "The cherubim shall have *their* wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be *turned* toward the mercy seat. ²¹ "You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give to you. ²² "There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel."
 2. Cherubim are spiritual, heavenly creatures. Along with the seraphim, they were created to declare the holiness and infinite perfections of God. The cherubim symbolized the otherness of God. God dwells in the heavens. This is expressed in the Lord’s Prayer: “Our Father, which art in heaven.” The cover of the Ark was called the Mercy Seat. It was the place where God would meet with His people. It was an infinite act of condescension.
 3. Now, the inner sanctuary of Solomon’s Temple was adorned with two giant cherubim fifteen feet tall and each with a wingspan of fifteen feet. The Ark was placed beneath their wings. The cherubim symbolized God’s heavenly domain.

- C. The transcendence of God is also seen in the thick cloud
1 Kings 8:12 NAU - "Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick cloud."
1. The cloud symbolized the veiled presence of God. He cannot be seen. He cannot be approached.
 2. God is holy, holy, holy. By nature, God is intrinsically set apart, above, beyond, unique.
 3. Sin has created a great chasm further separating God and man
 God hid Himself within the cloud
 4. The same was true at Mount Sinai
Exodus. 19:9-12 NAU - "The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever." Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD. ¹⁰ The LORD also said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; ¹¹ and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. ¹² "You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Beware that you do not go up on the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death."
Exodus. 19:16 NAU - "So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled."
 In essence God was saying, "I am here, but you cannot approach."
- D. The very existence of the Temple was God's condescension to His people
1. God shall not be confined to a building. The earth cannot contain Him.
1 Kings 8:27 NAU - "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!"
 2. The Temple was adorned with earthly treasures – gold and the cedars of Lebanon – yet, it was nothing to God.
 Isaiah described the treasures of the earth compared with the infinite greatness of God—they are less than nothing.
Isaiah 40:15-17 NAU - "Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust. ¹⁶ Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, Nor its beasts enough for a burnt offering. ¹⁷ All the nations are as nothing before Him, They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless."
 - a. Whole continents are as a speck as viewed by God
 Isaiah uses the word דַּקַּיִם {dak} which describes something of the smallest size – should God desire, He could lift the continents as though they were grains of dust
 - b. Isaiah adds - all of the nations are counted as "less than nothing." As we place value upon material things the smallest value would be 0 – nothing. Anything less than that would be a liability.

- c. There is nothing upon the earth worthy of His glory
Verse 16 - Lebanon was famous for all of its prized cedars – Hiram provided cedar for David’s house and would provide the wood for Solomon’s temple. But they mean nothing to God.

- 3. The Ark was the work of human hands made with earthly materials and yet it was a facsimile of God’s holy throne in heaven.
Hebrews 9:24 NAU - "For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;"

II. God is concealed, but He has also made Himself known. God has revealed Himself to the comprehension of man – God cannot be known apart from Divine revelation.

- A. The cloud was a veil, a separation, but at the same time it was God revealing Himself.
 - 1. The cloud was the visible manifestation of God
1 Kings 8:12 NAU - "Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick cloud."
 - 2. This was true in the wilderness when God used a cloud to reveal His presence.
Exodus. 13:21 NAU - "The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night."
 - 3. **Verse 11** refers to the cloud as the glory of God – a manifestation of His Divine essence.
1 Kings 8:11 NAU - "the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD."
 - 4. The cloud both concealed God and revealed Him. God has been pleased to reveal Himself to man.
- B. The Ark was the visible representation of the presence of God
 - 1. God dwelt among His people
 - 2. God also dwelt between the cherubim.
- C. We can also see God’s revelation of Himself in the description of the Ark’s contents.
 - 1. While God has revealed Himself dimly, He has made His will plainly known.
 - 2. The Ark was empty except for the tablets of the Law – **Verse 9**
 - 3. The Law was both a revelation of God’s Divine character as well as a reminder of His covenant promises. The Law bore testimony to God’s Covenant faithfulness as well as the requirement of obedience for His people.
 - 4. In the Decalogue God revealed Himself as the one, true, existing God. “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.”
 - a. God’s Words to Israel
Isaiah 44:6 – “Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God.”

- b. He described Himself to Moses
Exodus 3:13-14 – “And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”
 - c. God’s proper name יהוה is a form of the Hebrew verb of being - יהי – God revealed Himself to Moses as the God who “is”
 - d. God has His being in Himself - All that God is comes from Himself He is self-sufficient, self-complete, self-contented, self-sustaining, self-determining - God needs nothing outside of Himself
4. This infinite, eternal, omnipotent God has been pleased to enter into covenant with man. These stone tablets represented this covenant.

III. Jesus Christ is the ultimate revelation of God’s Divine glory

- A. Jesus Christ is the Eternal Word, God incarnate.
 - 1. Jesus Christ is God’s ultimate revelation of Himself. Jesus Christ is Emmanuel, God with us. He is the full expression of the Temple.
John 1:14 KJV - "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."
Hebrews 1:1-3 NAU - "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"
 - 2. God made a unique declaration at the transfiguration. Once again, God appeared in a cloud, but then turned all attention upon Christ as the full revelation of God.
Mark 9:7 NAU - "Then a cloud formed, overshadowing them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is My beloved Son, listen to Him!"
Colossians 2:9 NAU - "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,"
 - 3. Jesus declared, “Do you want to know God? You have to know Me.”
John 14:8-11 NAU - "Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, 'Show us the Father '? ¹⁰ "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. ¹¹ "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me"

- B. God cannot be known except by Divine revelation. Jesus Christ is that revelation.
1. Jesus is the only way to God. He is God's only Mediator.
John 14:6 NAU - "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."
 2. Jesus Christ in His prophetic office has revealed to us the way to God.

Conclusion:

1. The glory of the Gospel is that the God who is concealed has now become revealed in Christ. All who will look to Christ find the glory of the knowledge of God.
2 Corinthians 4:5-6 NAU - "For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."
2. There is nothing greater than knowing Christ.
Philippians 3:8-11 NAU - "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; ¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."
3. It is also important for us to understand that although God hasn't revealed the fullness of His infinite Divine essence, He has revealed how He would have us to live. Israel was not allowed to see within the cloud, but they clearly had the revelation of God's Law plainly inscribed on the stone tablets safely kept in the Ark.
The same Law is still in force and God expects us to obey.
Dale Ralph Davis writes: "I cannot penetrate secrets God has kept to himself, but I can seek to obey commandments that he has given to me. The Christian will usually find much about God that is obscure and baffling—but he has given us all the direction we need for godly living in Christ Jesus."¹

¹ Dale Ralph Davis, *1 Kings: The Wisdom and the Folly*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2002), 83.