

**1 Kings 8:22-66**  
**November 24, 2024**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: When you attend a worship service, what expectations do you have about it? What worship services have touched your heart the most and why? [Let people engage]

**Transition:** Today's text is all about Solomon leading the Israelite assembly in a "worship service" that is top heavy in prayer. Imagine being among the assembly. You're in a new Temple. It's a grand opening. The dedication of Solomon's Temple is a major event in the nation of Israel. Last week we learned that the ark of the covenant was brought into the Temple, and the glory of the Lord filled the house of God. Few moments in biblical history surpass this scene in hope, gladness and glory as God reveals His presence and the people worship Him with praise and thousands of sacrifices.

Let's take a good look at Solomon's prayer in which he includes aspects of God's character, the covenant relationship between God and Israel, the presence of God, and his specific requests for the people and his concerns of the Israelites at the time. Let's begin.

**BOOK:**

**Solomon's Prayer of Dedication**

<sup>22</sup> Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven <sup>23</sup> and said:

"O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. <sup>24</sup> You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.

<sup>25</sup> "Now LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me as you have done.' <sup>26</sup> And now, O God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.

<sup>27</sup> "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! <sup>28</sup> Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, O LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. <sup>29</sup> May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. <sup>30</sup> Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

<sup>31</sup> "When a man wrongs his neighbor and is required to take an oath and he comes and swears the oath before your altar in this temple, <sup>32</sup> then hear from heaven and act. Judge

between your servants, condemning the guilty and bringing down on his own head what he has done. Declare the innocent not guilty, and so establish his innocence.

<sup>33</sup> “When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, and when they turn back to you and confess your name, praying and making supplication to you in this temple, <sup>34</sup> then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them back to the land you gave to their fathers.

<sup>35</sup> “When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and confess your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, <sup>36</sup> then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.

<sup>37</sup> “When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come, <sup>38</sup> and when a prayer or plea is made by any of your people Israel—each one aware of the afflictions of his own heart, and spreading out his hands toward this temple— <sup>39</sup> then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of all men), <sup>40</sup> so that they will fear you all the time they live in the land you gave our fathers.

<sup>41</sup> “As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name— <sup>42</sup> for men will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when he comes and prays toward this temple, <sup>43</sup> then hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.

<sup>44</sup> “When your people go to war against their enemies, wherever you send them, and when they pray to the LORD toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name, <sup>45</sup> then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause.

<sup>46</sup> “When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive to his own land, far away or near; <sup>47</sup> and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their conquerors and say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly’; <sup>48</sup> and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their fathers, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name; <sup>49</sup> then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause. <sup>50</sup> And forgive your people, who have sinned against you; forgive all the offenses they have committed against you, and cause their conquerors to show them mercy; <sup>51</sup> for they are your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out of Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace.

<sup>52</sup> “May your eyes be open to your servant’s plea and to the plea of your people Israel, and may you listen to them whenever they cry out to you. <sup>53</sup> For you singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance, just as you declared through your servant Moses when you, O Sovereign LORD, brought our fathers out of Egypt.”

<sup>54</sup> When Solomon had finished all these prayers and supplications to the LORD, he rose from before the altar of the LORD, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out toward heaven. <sup>55</sup> He stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel in a loud voice, saying:

<sup>56</sup>“Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses. <sup>57</sup> May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us. <sup>58</sup> May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep the commands, decrees and regulations he gave our fathers. <sup>59</sup> And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel according to each day’s need, <sup>60</sup> so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God and that there is no other. <sup>61</sup> But your hearts must be fully committed to the LORD our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time.”

### *The Dedication of the Temple*

<sup>62</sup> Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. <sup>63</sup> Solomon offered a sacrifice of fellowship offerings (peace offerings) to the LORD: twenty-two thousand cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats. So the king and all the Israelites dedicated the temple of the LORD.

<sup>64</sup> On that same day the king consecrated the middle part of the courtyard in front of the temple of the LORD, and there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings, because the bronze altar before the LORD was too small to hold the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings.

<sup>65</sup> So Solomon observed the festival at that time, and all Israel with him—a vast assembly, people from Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt. They celebrated it before the LORD our God for seven days and seven days more, fourteen days in all. <sup>66</sup> On the following day he sent the people away. They blessed the king and then went home, joyful and glad in heart for all the good things the LORD had done for his servant David and his people Israel.

### **Process Observations/Questions:**

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

### **LOOK:**

Solomon’s prayer of dedication is well-rounded. Notice how he praises God’s character, the covenant relationship between God and Israel, and the presence of God. He also makes specific requests for the people and his concerns of the Israelites. Are we as well-rounded? Let’s make sure we are expressing our praise and adoration of who God is and thank Him for all he does.

### **Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (1 Kings 8:22-66)*. Victor Books.**

### **III. Dedication (8)**

God filled the temple with His glory when the ark was brought in (vv. 1–11). In later years, Ezekiel would see that glory depart (Ezek. 8–11). Solomon addressed the people (vv. 12–21) and reminded them of God's faithfulness to keep His promises. Then he prayed to the Lord on behalf of his family (vv. 22–30), citizens who sinned (vv. 31–40), Gentile strangers (vv. 41–43), and the nation in future exile (vv. 44–53). The key thought of his prayer is that God would hear their cries and be merciful to them in spite of their sins. Solomon makes it clear in his prayer that the condition of Israel's heart was more important than the presence of the temple. He knew that sin would bring chastening, but that repentance would bring forgiveness and blessing. It was more important to dedicate the people than the building.

Verses 44–53 certainly did come true, for Israel was taken captive because of their sins, and God brought them back to their land to rebuild their temple and serve Him again. This prayer and promise will also be fulfilled in these latter days when Israel goes back to her land in unbelief.

After the prayer, Solomon blessed the people (vv. 54–61) and exhorted them to have their hearts right with God. Note that the king is concerned that other nations know the truth of the Lord (v. 60, and see vv. 41–43). It is too bad that Israel did not fulfill her mission to take the truth to the Gentiles. The celebration lasted fourteen days (v. 65), with the first week taken up with sacrifices, feasts, and the official dedication ceremonies. In the second week, the people went back to their tents to rejoice in the Lord. In 9:1–9, God appeared to Solomon to remind him that with his privileges came great responsibilities; that He would establish his throne forever if the people followed the Lord in obedience; but that He would cut off the nation if they sinned. Unfortunately, the nation lapsed into sin and unbelief, and the prophecy of 9:6–9 came true. The beautiful and costly temple was plundered and destroyed in 586 B.C. when the Babylonians took the people captive.

God originally dwelt in the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34), then in Solomon's temple. The glory of God then came to earth in the Person of Christ (John 1:12–14). Today, every true Christian is the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19–20), as is the church collectively (Eph. 2:21) and locally (1 Cor. 3:16). There will be a future Jewish temple during the tribulation period (2 Thes. 2:1–12) in which the Antichrist will be worshiped by an unbelieving world. There will also be a glorious temple during the 1,000 year reign of Christ (Ezek. 40–48).

**Constable, C.L. (1985). *1 Kings*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 504-505) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books**

#### *c. Solomon's prayer of dedication (8:22–53)*

8:22–24. **Solomon stood** and then kneeled (v. 54) on a special bronze platform that had been built in the temple courtyard for the dedication service (2 Chron. 6:13). Solomon began his prayer with worship and praise to God for His uniqueness and His faithfulness in keeping His promises. **Love** translates *hesed*, meaning loyal love (cf. 1 Kings 10:9).

The king then proceeded to petition God and to intercede for His people. Nine requests may be noted in this prayer:

(1) God's presence and protection.

8:25–30. Solomon called on God to continue to be faithful to His **promises** to **David** (vv. 25–26; cf. 2:4) and to continue to **hear** the prayers of His **people** (8:28–30; **hear** occurs five times in these three verses). Of course no temple or even **the heavens** could **contain** the omnipresent God (v. 27). **Heaven** itself is His **dwelling place** (cf. vv. 39, 49; Ps. 11:4; Hab. 2:20). Yet in His majesty He is interested in His people's prayers.

(2) Forgiveness of trespasses.

8:31–32. Solomon asked God to **judge** righteously in interpersonal disputes among the Israelites.

(3) Forgiveness of sins that had caused defeat in battle.

8:33–34. The king asked the Lord to **forgive** His **people** when they confessed their sins that caused defeat in combat.

(4) Forgiveness of sins that had brought on drought.

8:35–36. Solomon also asked God to **forgive** His **people** if they confessed sins that resulted in **rain** being withheld (cf. Lev. 26:18–19; Deut. 11:16–17; 28:23–24).

(5) Forgiveness of sins that had resulted in other calamities.

8:37–40. **Famine ... plague ... blight ... mildew, locusts ... grasshoppers**, enemies, **disaster**, and **disease** were all instruments God used to chasten His sinning people. (See the chart "The Covenant Chastenings," near Amos 4:6.) Again the king asked God to **forgive** those who repented of sin that led to these calamities. Solomon affirmed God's knowledge of people's motives (**hearts**).

(6) Mercy for God-fearing foreigners.

8:41–43. Solomon interceded on behalf of non-Israelites who would trust Yahweh and pray to Him. By hearing them, God's fame would spread worldwide.

(7) Victory in battle.

8:44–45. Solomon asked God to **uphold** His **people** when they prayed to Him in times of physical distress in combat.

(8) Restoration after captivity.

8:46–51. The king seemed to have prophetic insight into the fate of God's people. They did indeed go into captivity because of their sins against God; they called on Him for forgiveness, and they experienced restoration to their land. Centuries later Daniel prayed **toward the land** when he was in Babylon (Dan. 6:10).

(9) Attention to every prayer.

8:52–53. Solomon summarized his petitions by calling on God to hear His people **whenever they cry out** in prayer. These calamities were all listed in Deuteronomy as curses on Israel for her breaking the covenant (Deut. 28:22, 25, 38, 42, 59; 31:17, 29; 32:24).

In this whole prayer (1 Kings 8:23–53) Solomon called on God, who had been faithful to His promises in the past, to continue to be faithful and to show mercy to His people (His chosen **inheritance**, vv. 36, 51, 53) in the future. Confession and forsaking of sin would result in God's hearing His people's prayers ("hear" occurs 13 times in this prayer, and in the first eight of the nine petitions) and God's forgiving them ("forgive" occurs 6 times).

*d. Solomon's blessing of the people (8:54–61)*

8:54–55. **Solomon ... had been kneeling** in prayer **with his hands spread out toward heaven** in a posture of supplication. Then he arose to pronounce a benediction on the people.

8:56–61. God had **given rest** (peace) **to His people** and had kept **all the good promises He** Had given **through ... Moses**. Solomon reminded the people of this. Then he expressed his desire for three things: That **the LORD would be with** Solomon's generation **as He** had been **with** his forefathers, that God would give His people the will to **walk in all His ways**, and that the requests Solomon had made in his prayer would remain close to the heart of **God day** by day. Solomon ultimately desired that **all the peoples of the earth** (cf. v. 43) might **know that Yahweh is** the only true **God** (cf. 18:39). In order for all this to take place Solomon reminded the people that they **must be fully committed to the LORD** and obedient to **His Word**. Solomon himself eventually failed to do this.

As the king finished speaking, “fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple” (2 Chron. 7:1) as it had earlier filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34–35; Lev. 9:23–24).

*e. Solomon's sacrifices (8:62–66)*

8:62–63. The number of animals sacrificed (**22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep and goats**) seems incredibly large. But records of other sacrifices that involved thousands of animals are extant. One must remember that thousands of priests sacrificed on many auxiliary altars, and the celebration lasted for two weeks.

8:64–66. The **same day** Solomon dedicated the temple he also **consecrated ... the courtyard in front of the temple** with his **offerings**. This dedication took place at the beginning of **the festival** of Tabernacles which normally lasted one week, but was extended to two weeks on this special occasion. The Feast of Tabernacles commemorated Israel's years of wandering in the wilderness (Lev. 23:33, 41–43). It was fitting that the temple should be dedicated at this feast since that permanent sanctuary now symbolized the end of Israel's wanderings. People from as far away as **Lebo Hamath** in northern Israel toward the Euphrates River and **the Wadi of Egypt** (modern Wadi el-Arish) far to the south attended the festivities; all Israel participated. The **people** returned **home** at the end of the feast **joyful** and thankful to God for His goodness to them.

***Mathews, K. A. (1998). The Historical Books. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), Holman Concise Bible Commentary (p. 137-138). Broadman & Holman Publishers.***

***Temple Dedication (8:1–66)***. This event was the highlight of Solomon's career just as the bringing of the ark into Jerusalem was David's (2 Sam. 6). Solomon was accomplishing what the Lord promised to David's descendants. After the ark was set under the cherubim in the holy of holies, the whole house was filled with a cloud. The glory of the Lord was so great that it prohibited entry into the temple (see Exod. 40:34–35). This meant that the presence of the Lord was in the temple. The ark was moved in the wilderness from place to place, but the temple provided a permanent dwelling for the ark.

Solomon showed in his prayer that he did not conceive of the Lord as bound to a sacred place like the deities of the Canaanites. The temple could not house the God of heaven. The “Name” of the Lord transcends a mere physical structure. Solomon anticipated Israel's captivity. He prayed that God would hear the repentant prayers of His people and bring them back to their inheritance

(see Deut. 28:15–68). Solomon exhorted the people to walk faithfully before the Lord. The dedicatory service concluded with a fourteen-day feast of worship and celebration.

***Tatum, S. L. (1972). 1 Kings. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher's Bible Commentary (pp. 196-197). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.***

### **The Dedication of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 8:1–66)**

*The passage*—The dedication ceremonies for King Solomon's Temple began with the assembling of the elders and heads of the various tribes. It was to be a national sanctuary and the center of worship for all of the tribes. They brought the ark of God from its temporary resting place to its permanent quarters. They sacrificed so many animals that they could not be numbered.

When the priests came out of the holy of holies where they had placed the ark, a cloud filled the Temple. It symbolized the glory of God which filled the house.

Solomon made a long speech of dedication. He praised God and he blessed the people. He recalled David's desire to build the Temple. God had fulfilled the promise he had made to David. He declared the Temple as the dwelling place of the eternal God.

God's covenant to David and Solomon that the throne of David would be preserved is the subject of much of the dedicatory speech. Following his dedicatory speech there was a dedicatory prayer.

The Temple was to be a place of prayer. Solomon listed the objects of prayer which God would hear. Forgiveness for sin against God is a constant need. Offence against one's neighbor is another daily problem. In time of war God's people need to pray for deliverance. Drought was a frequent problem, and the people of Israel would need to pray for rain. Various plagues and diseases would call the people to prayer. In verse 38 the term "whatever prayer" seems to cover all other kinds of need. Included in the listing were the prayers of foreigners and prayers from men far away in battle or in exile.

Solomon's prayer of dedication had been made on his knees with his hands outstretched toward heaven. He rose to bless the people again. They offered many more sacrifices to God.

God appeared to Solomon again. He promised to hear the prayers offered at the Temple. He renewed the promise to establish the throne of Israel forever. He warned that Israel would be cut off if they were to forsake God.

*Special points*—The Temple was not just a private place of worship for Solomon and the royal family. It was for all the people. The passage in 8:41–43 gives special attention to the foreigner and his missionary significance.

The ark of the covenant was so called because it contained the tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. This was God's covenant with his people and the standard of their obedience and conduct.

*Truth for today*—Sometimes it is good for us to remember that not all of our good plans will be brought to reality in our own lifetime. In 8:18 Solomon recalled that God said it was good for David to have the building of a Temple in his heart. Our dreams should exceed our grasp. Often others will get the joy of doing what we would like to have done for God.

Institutional religion is too frequently scorned in our day. Throughout the Bible there is the teaching that a strong base of operation for world missions is wise. The person who does not worship in a special place seldom worships anywhere else either.

**The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (1 Kings 8:22-66). Grand Rapids, MI:  
Zondervan.**

© 2024 Lee Ann Penick