

## Solomon Dedicates the Temple to the Lord

### 1 Kings 8:1-43

1 Kings 8:1-21 – *“Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which is Zion. Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with King Solomon at the feast in the month of Ethanim, which is the seventh month. So all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. Then they brought up the ark of the LORD, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that were in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim. For the cherubim spread their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. The poles extended so that the ends of the poles could be seen from the holy place, in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.*

*And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.*

*Then Solomon spoke: ‘The LORD said He would dwell in the dark cloud. I have surely built You an exalted house, and a place for You to dwell in forever.’ Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. And he said: “Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David, and with His hand has fulfilled it, saying, ‘Since the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe 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 my father David to build a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. But the LORD said to my father David, ‘Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.’ So the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke; and I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised; and I have built a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. And there I have made a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD which He made with our father’s when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.”*

## Background Notes

1 Kings 6 and 7 described the construction of the Temple and its furnishings. In chapter 8 the Ark of the Covenant was brought into the Temple, and the Temple was dedicated to the Lord. The Ark of the Covenant was placed in the new Holy of Holies in the Temple, under the wings of the large golden cherubim.

Verse 9 says that there was nothing in the Ark except *“the two tablets of stone that Moses put there at Horeb.”* What about the manna and Aaron’s rod that were also kept in the Ark, according to Hebrews 9:4? Remember, the writer to the Hebrews was speaking of the Ark when it was in the Tabernacle. Apparently these items were no longer with the Ark at Solomon’s time. The Bible doesn’t reveal what became of them.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. When the Ark is in its rightful place, the glory of the Lord will be seen.

Verse 6: *“Then the priests brought in the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim...”* And verses 10-11: *“And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place... the LORD filled the house of the LORD.”*

The Ark of the Covenant was finally at rest in its rightful place. Deuteronomy 12 says God never intended for the Ark to continually travel, as in it did with the Tabernacle in the wilderness. When the children of Israel came into the Promised Land, the Ark was to come to rest in the central sanctuary, in a location that God would choose. That time had now come. God had chosen Jerusalem, and the Temple was now finished. When the Ark came to rest in its rightful place, the glory of the Lord filled the Temple.

As most of you know, the Ark of the Covenant is a picture, or “type,” of Jesus Christ. The Ark in the Holy of Holies was the meeting place between God and mankind, and it pictures Jesus our Lord, as the *“one Mediator between God and man”* (1 Timothy 2:5). The blood of the atoning sacrifice was placed on the mercy seat of the Ark so there could be a relationship between God and His people. What a picture! The shed blood of Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to have a relationship with God - through Jesus Christ’s finished work on the cross for our sins.

So the Ark is a picture of Christ, and when the Ark is in its rightful place, the glory of the Lord will be seen! When the Lord Jesus has His rightful place in our lives, the glory of the Lord will be seen in our lives. This is not only true in the future in Heaven, when we have our resurrected bodies, but it can be true now! 2 Corinthians 4:10-11 says that if the Lord has His rightful place in our lives, even to the point of our suffering for His sake, His life will be seen and manifested in our mortal flesh. People will see God’s glory in our lives. When the Ark is in its rightful place, the glory of the Lord will be seen.

**2. When the Ark is in its rightful place, the prayers of God's people will be answered.**

1 Kings 8:22-43 - *"Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven; and he said: 'LORD God of Israel, there is no God in heaven above or on earth below like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts. You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled it with Your hand, as it is this day. Therefore, Lord God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk before Me as you have walked before Me.' And now I pray, O God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David my father.*

*But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, 'My name shall be there,' that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive.*

*When anyone sins against his neighbor, and is forced to take an oath, and comes and takes an oath before Your altar in this temple, then hear in heaven, and act, and judge Your servants, condemning the wicked, bringing his way on his head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness. When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and when they turn back to You and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in this temple, then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to their fathers.*

*When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance.*

*When there is famine in the land, pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers; when their enemy besieges them in the land of their cities; whatever plague or whatever sickness there is; whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple, then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men), that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which You gave to our fathers.*

*Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name's sake (for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name."*

Solomon made a number of requests to the Lord in his great prayer of dedication. All these requests were in line with the Word of God. Remember, the Bible that Solomon had was the Book of Law. Read the Book of Deuteronomy and you'll find that Solomon prayed in line with the Word - something we should always do!

After acknowledging God's greatness and thanking Him for His faithfulness, Solomon prayed for the Lord's continued presence with His people (v22-30). He prayed that God would judge the guilty and justify the righteous (v31-32). He prayed that God would forgive His people when they confessed their sin, and that God would remove His discipline of defeat in battle, or drought, famine, or plague, when the people turned back to the Lord (v33-40). Solomon also prayed for the God-fearing foreigners in the land, that they would also know God's blessing and have their prayers answered (v41-43).

There are more requests at the end of the chapter, and as we follow Israel's history, we find that God answered all these prayers.

Do you think God would have honored Solomon's prayers if Solomon had not honored God's desire to place the Ark of the Covenant in His Temple in Jerusalem? Remember, the Ark is a "type," or picture, of Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ is in His rightful place in our lives, the prayers of God's people will be answered. Are your prayers being answered? Are they in line with the Word of God? Is Christ at the center of your life? When the "Ark" is in His rightful place, the prayers of God's people will be answered.

## **Practical Application**

### **Let's not limit God!**

Solomon prayed, *"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!"*(v27). King Solomon realized that God's presence was not limited to a building in Israel. And we need to realize that while God is pleased to be at the center of our lives, and fellowships and ministries, He is not limited to our small corner of the world. He is a transcendent God! Some Christians limit God to themselves, and their fellowships, and their ministries. They almost "put God in a box"!

Let's not distort the wonderful truth that God dwells in our midst by limiting Him in any way. Let's not limit God!