

Solomon Continues the Dedication of the Temple

1 Kings 8:44-66

1 Kings 8:44-53 - *“When Your people go out to battle against their enemy, wherever You send them, and when they pray to the LORD toward the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, then hear in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.*

When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; yet when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of those who took them captive, saying, ‘We have sinned and done wrong, we have committed wickedness’; and when they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name: then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You.

Grant them compassion before those who took them captive, that they may have compassion on them (for they are Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of the iron furnace), that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant and the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to them whenever they call to You. For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You spoke by Your servant Moses, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD.”

Background Notes

In the first part of 1 King 8 King Solomon brought the Ark of the Covenant up to the Temple, and had it placed in its new resting place in the Holy of Holies. A great number of sacrifices were offered at the time: *“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.”*

After Solomon finished his prayer of dedication he offered many more sacrifices. Verses 62-63: *“Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.”* That’s a lot of sacrifices! In fact, there were so many sacrifices that King Solomon consecrated part of the Temple courtyard for sacrificing for this occasion.

Weren't so many sacrifices a great waste? No. Before we jump to that wrong conclusion, notice that the great majority of these sacrifices were "peace offerings" (v63). According to the Law, in the case of peace offerings, the meat of the slain animal was given to the priest and to the people who brought the offering. Only the fat portions were burned on the altar. So the sacrificed animals were not wasted.

Furthermore, even if the meat portions had been completely consumed on the altar (as in the case of burnt offerings), it would not have been a waste. If it's from a heart that is right before the Lord, worship is not a waste! Worship is never a waste of time or money or material if it's given in true worship of the Lord. Remember Mark 14, when Mary of Bethany poured expensive perfume on the Lord as an act of worship? The Lord said it was not a waste!

Here's a serious question: how many sins did all these sacrifices take away? Answer: none! Think of it – 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep, and the innumerable sacrifices (v5) - as well as all the other sacrifices that were offered day after day and year after year throughout Israel's history – **did not remove a single sin!**

Hebrews 10:11-12 says, *"And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man [Christ], after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God."*

All the sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed forward to the one and only Sacrifice for sins who was to come: the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The purpose of the Old Testament sacrifices not only showed the seriousness of sin, and were a reminder that the penalty of sin is death, but they all look forward to the Sacrifice to come - **the Lamb of God!**

Doctrinal Points

1. God disciplines His people.

After Solomon's request for God's help in battle (v44-45), he prayed for God's discipline when the people sinned, and for God's forgiveness when they repented (v46-53). Have you ever prayed for God's discipline when you sin? That's really godly praying, isn't it? Solomon anticipated that the people would sin, and according to the consequences stated in the Law, he foresaw that God would allow His people to be taken into captivity. All of this took place, of course.

But Solomon also anticipated that the people would repent and turn back to the Lord. And when they would turn back to the Lord, and pray, and repent and confess their sin, Solomon asked the Lord to forgive them and bring them back to the land. This, of course, did take place. The Jews returned from captivity in Babylon under the edict of Cyrus, the Persian emperor. And his prayer will be answered in the fullest sense when the Jewish people return to the land and to the Lord in the future (see Romans 11).

God not only had to discipline His Old Testament people, He has to discipline us as well. Why? Because He loves us! So don't be discouraged when the Lord has to discipline you. When we are being disciplined, remember what Hebrews 12:5-6 says: *"Do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He disciplines."* God disciplines His people.

2. God keeps His promises!

1 Kings 8:54-66 - *"And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, that he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying, 'Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses. May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us, that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers. And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day may require, that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; there is no other. Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day.'*

Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. On the same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that was in front of the house of the LORD; for there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar that was before the LORD was too small to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings. At that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven more days—fourteen days. On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they blessed the king, and went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the good that the LORD had done for His servant David, and for Israel His people."

What a great time this was! Normally the Feast of Tabernacles lasted one week, but Solomon extended the feast another seven days because of the great number of people from all over Israel, and because of the people's great joy. Notice what King Solomon said when he finished his prayer of dedication: *"Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses"* (v56).

No wonder there was joy in Israel! God had kept all His promises to His people. He redeemed them out of bondage in Egypt, as He promised. He sustained them in the wilderness, as He promised. He brought them into the Land, as He promised. He defeated their enemies, as He promised. He dwelt in their midst, as He promised.

God keeps His promises to His people, then and today. Jesus promised every believer, *“I will never leave you nor forsake you”* (Hebrews 13:5). Are you a believer? Has Jesus ever forsaken you? You may have forsaken the Lord, but He has never forsaken you!

In John 14:3 Jesus promised that He was going to prepare a place for us in Heaven, and that He would come again and take us to be with Him forever! What a great promise! Do you believe that promise? God keeps His promises.

Practical Application

Pray in any position!

What position do you take when you pray? Do you kneel? Do you sit? Do you stand? Do you lie down? Do you fold your hands? Do you put your hands up? Do you keep your hands down? What is the biblical position for prayer?

Answer: **Pray in any position!**

When Solomon began his prayer of dedication, he was standing: *“Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD... and spread out his hands toward heaven”*(v22). Sometime during his prayer Solomon went to the kneeling position. Verse 54: *“...when Solomon had finished praying... that he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.”*

People prayed in all kinds of positions in the Bible. Remember Jonah? He was curled up in the stomach of a big fish – but God heard him! The position we take when praying is not important. It's the **fact of praying** that's important. Sometimes the position of praying can show the attitude of the heart before the Lord - but the attitude of the heart is what's important, not the position we take when praying.

How often do you talk with the Lord? 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says *“pray without ceasing.”* Our communication lines with the Lord should always be open. Remember, the position for praying is not what's most important. It's the act of praying.

Pray in any position!