

1 Kings 8 – Part 1 (vs. 1-21)

Introduction

1. Chapter 8 focuses on the dedication of the temple and there's a TON of stuff here
2. It's a long chapter (66 verses) so in order to do it justice, I'm going to break it down into three weeks using the natural breaks in the passage
 - a. vs. 1-21 focus on bringing the Ark of the Covenant into the Holy of Holies and Solomon's address to Israel
 - b. vs. 22-53 focus on Solomon's prayer of dedication
 - c. vs. 54-66 focus on Solomon's benediction of Israel and the sacrifices

A. Solomon dedicates the temple on the Feast of Tabernacles (READ 8:1-2)

1. One of the things that is not immediately obvious, is that Solomon had waited 11 months to dedicate the temple and move the Ark of the Covenant into the Holy of Holies; how do we know this?
 - a. According to 1 Kings 6:38, the temple was completed in the 8th month (Bul)
 - b. But, 8:2 says that the events we're about to witness took place in the 7th month, Ethanim (called Tishri after the Exile), which would be almost a full year later
 - c. The question is, Why would Solomon wait almost a year to dedicate the temple after its completion
2. It appears he was waiting to perform the dedication until the Feast of Tabernacles:
 - a. Notice that in v. 2 it says, "**all the men of Israel assembled themselves to King Solomon at the feast...**"
 - b. Now, jump to the end of chapter 8 to verses 65-66 (READ):
 - 1) Notice that it says Solomon "**observed the feast at that time, and all Israel with him...**"
 - 2) You'll also notice that after the 8th day, the people "**went to their tents**"
 - c. That last reference to living in tents indicates that this was the Feast of Tabernacles because that's the one that required Israel to live in tents, and it was in the 7th month
3. This leads us to another question: Why did Solomon choose this particular feast on which to dedicate the temple?
 - a. One answer is that it made sense logistically:
 - 1) There were seven annual feasts commanded by the LORD, but only three required all of the men of Israel to gather together (generally to wherever the tabernacle was): Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and the Feast of Tabernacles
 - 2) It made logical sense that Solomon would choose one of these three major feasts in which to dedicate the temple
 - 3) What's interesting, however, is that Solomon didn't choose the closest of these three festivals in terms of time (Feast of Unleavened Bread), or even the second closest (Feast of Weeks)
 - 4) Instead, he chose the one that was the furthest away—the Feast of Tabernacles which was a full 11 months away

- b. There was a more theological reason for dedicating the temple during the Feast of Tabernacles:
 - 1) The seven annual feasts were bookended by events that are directly related to the Exodus:
 - a) The first two—Passover and The Feast of Unleavened Bread—happened in the beginning of the year and they marked the beginning of the Exodus and reminded Israel of God’s deliverance from bondage
 - b) The last one—the Feast of Booths—happened in late fall and reminded Israel of their time wandering in the wilderness
 - c) The feasts in the middle focused on God’s ongoing goodness and provisions
 - 2) In some respects, even though the Exodus had technically ended when Joshua and the Israelites conquered the land, not all of the promises God made regarding the end of the Exodus had fully been realized:
 - a) He promised them rest from all their enemies when they came into the land
 - b) He promised that He would choose a place for His name to dwell, a city within the borders of Israel
 - c) The temporary tabernacle, which was designed specifically for use during the Exodus, would be replaced by a permanent temple
 - 3) Even though Israel had been in the land at this point for over 400 years, none of these things had come to pass until NOW: under King David and Solomon, God had finally brought Israel rest from their enemies, chosen Jerusalem as the place for His name to dwell, and chose Solomon to build His house
 - c. So, the Feast of Tabernacles was the PERFECT time to dedicate the temple:
 - 1) The Feast of Tabernacles served to remind Israel not just of the time they wandered in the wilderness, but that God dwelt among them in His own temporary shelter, the tabernacle (READ Exodus 29:42-46)
 - 2) What better time to celebrate the replacement of God’s temporary home with His permanent home, the temple, than the feast designed to remind Israel of God’s dwelling among them?
4. Takeaway: many scholars believe that the Feast of Tabernacles was also a prophetic feast foreshadowing the coming of Messiah:
- a. It foreshadowed Christ’s first coming:
 - 1) When John wrote in John 1:14 that, “**the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us...**” he used an interesting word for dwell
 - 2) There are at least 19 different words/synonyms that John could have used, but he chose one that in a literal sense means to spread or dwell in a tent (used here figuratively to mean dwelt or lived)
 - b. It also foreshadowed Christ’s second coming, a time when God would dwell among us without the need for a physical building—tent or temple:
 - 1) READ Revelation 21:1-3—John used the same Greek word here as he did in John 1:14, but he used it twice, once as a noun and again as a verb; a more lit. rendering would be

“Behold, the tent (tabernacle) of God is among men, and He will pitch His tent (dwell) among them...”

- 2) Now obviously John was not referring to God literally pitching His tent among us in the new heavens and new earth; he was speaking figuratively about God living among us
- 3) Now, take a look at Revelation 21:22: he uses a different word here which refers to a physical temple
- 4) What we see here is that when it comes to eternity, God will make His dwelling among us, but not in a temporary tent/tabernacle like He did in the wilderness, or even in a physical temple like He did for much of Israel’s history
- 5) The Lord Almighty and the Lamb of God will be the temple

B. The LORD’s presence fills the temple (8:3-11)

1. At this time, the Ark of the Covenant was in a temporary tent in the City of David, just outside Jerusalem, and the Tabernacle was in Gibeon
2. So, the elders of Israel and the priests packed up the tabernacle and all the furnishings, picked up the Ark, transported it all to Jerusalem (READ 8:3-11)
 - a. Along the way, Solomon and **“all the congregation of Israel”** traveled before the Ark making sacrifices along the way:
 - 1) This is reminiscent of when David transported the Ark to the City of David, stopping every six paces to make a sacrifice (not sure if they did that here, but probably something similar)
 - 2) Notice that they sacrificed **“so many sheep and oxen they could not be counted or numbered”** (5)
 - b. When they got to Jerusalem, they set the Ark in the Holy of Holies, between the cherubim under their wings
3. Then something remarkable happened—as soon as the priests entered the temple (the Holy Place), the LORD came down in a cloud and His glory completely filled the temple, so much so that the priests were unable to continue their duties (RE-READ 10-11):
 - a. This must have been some sight to see! The statements here in 1 Kings 8 don’t do it justice; the parallel account in 2 Chronicles 5:11-14 is way more amazing (READ)
 - b. The significance of this even cannot be overstated: we alluded to this earlier, but during the Exodus God promised Israel that a time would come when He would choose a place for His name to dwell and that day was now...literally
 - c. From this day forward, God would require them to bring their tithes and offerings to His house, the temple in Jerusalem and worship Him there
 - d. He would no longer accept being worshipped at their high places throughout Israel
4. There’s one last thing in this section that we should note, and it has to do with the contents of the Ark:
 - a. In v. 9 we read that there was nothing inside the Ark EXCEPT the two stone tablets which Moses received at Mt. Horeb (Mt. Sinai)
 - b. These tablets contained the 10 commandments and God commanded Moses to place them into the Ark because they were the foundation of His covenant with Israel (READ Deuteronomy 10:1-5)

- c. The fact that they were the only thing inside the Ark indicates the singular importance of God's Word when it comes to the LORD's relationship with Israel
 - d. The LORD's continued presence in His house, dwelling among His people, would ultimately be dependent on their obedience to His commands which were now sitting smack-dab in the middle of the Holy of Holies
5. Takeaway:
- a. We're not all that different than Israel in some respects
 - b. The foundation of the LORD's covenant with Israel was the ten commandments; the foundation of our covenant with the LORD is the Gospel
 - c. We're also alike in that God's Word is central to us experiencing and enjoying the LORD's presence
 - d. Just like Israel, our obedience or disobedience to God's Word impacts our relationship with Him
 - e. We have the advantage of God Himself dwelling within us through the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the promise that He will never leave us or forsake us, but we can either delight Him through our response to His commands, or grieve and quench Him by our disobedience (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19)

C. Solomon reflects on the LORD's faithfulness to His promises (8:12-21)
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** I believe Solomon had two things in mind here

1. The first thing Solomon had in mind was the LORD's faithfulness to His promise to dwell among His people (READ 8:12-13):
 - a. Notice in v. 12 what Solomon said: **"The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick cloud"**
 - 1) The LORD said this at Mt. Sinai when He gave Moses and Israel the ten commandments (READ Exodus 19:9-20:22)
 - 2) From that point forward throughout Israel's wanderings in the wilderness, God presented Himself as a cloud, descending upon and filling the tabernacle
 - 3) This is what came to Solomon's mind after witnessing the LORD descend upon the temple in the form of a cloud
 - 4) It was a clear sign of God presence and His intent to now dwell in His house among His people
 - b. Now, jump down to v. 21 (READ):
 - 1) Notice how this relates to what Solomon just alluded to from Exodus 19
 - 2) The ten commandments were the foundation of the LORD's covenant with Israel and His promise to dwell among them
 - 3) So, Solomon informs the people that he has placed the Ark along with the tablets containing the covenant into the Holy of Holies
2. The second thing Solomon had in mind was the LORD's faithfulness to His promises to David (READ 8:14-20):
 - a. Twice in these seven verses Solomon refers to God fulfilling His promises to David (v. 15 & 20)

- b. There are two promises Solomon mentions here, the promise that Solomon would become king and that he would build a house for the name of the LORD
 - c. One of the things I find interesting here, that may indicate the humility of Solomon at this point, is that he mentions building a house for the name of the LORD FIVE times, but only mentions himself becoming king once
3. Takeaway: it's difficult, if not impossible, to rank God's attributes in terms of importance, but if we could His faithfulness would have to rank near the top
- a. The Bible is filled with God's promises, but they would all be meaningless if He were not faithful
 - b. In fact, the foundation of our faith in Him is His faithfulness
 - c. Listen to the LORD's promise to Israel through Moses (Deuteronomy 7:9), "**Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments;**"
 - d. One of my favorite NT verses is 2 Timothy 2:13, "**If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.**"