

1 Kings 8 – Part 2 (vs. 22-53)

Introduction

1. As I mentioned last week, chapter 8 deals with the dedication of the temple, but because of the length of the passage we're looking at it in three parts
2. The first part was last week where the dedication began with Solomon bringing the Ark of the Covenant into the Holy of Holies and God filling the temple with His presence
3. Today we're in vs. 22-53 which focuses on Solomon's prayer of dedication to the LORD
 - a. In vs. 22-26 Solomon calls on the LORD to uphold his covenant with David
 - b. In vs. 27-53 Solomon calls on the LORD to uphold his covenant with Israel
4. There are some important elements to Solomon's prayer that we should note as we go through the passage:
 - a. First, much of what He prays comes directly from passages in God's Word and these lay the foundation for his prayer (e.g. Deuteronomy 7, 28, & 30 and Leviticus 26)
 - b. Second, the tone and content of Solomon's prayer is very different than what we might expect at a modern-day dedication:
 - 1) For instance, a baby dedication is generally filled with positive affirmations to the parents, and hopeful expectations for the child
 - 2) A building dedication, say for a hospital or school, is generally filled with praise and flattery for the benefactors that made it possible and bold pronouncements about how it will be used to change the future
 - 3) However, Solomon's prayer is less celebratory and more subdued, and takes on a sobering tone

A. Solomon calls on the LORD to uphold his covenant with David (READ 8:22-26)

1. Solomon begins by praising God for His covenant loyalty
 - a. He declares, **“there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath”**
 - b. There are all kinds of things that set God apart from all the false, fake gods of the world, but Solomon has one particular thing in mind here: God's loyalty to His covenant
 - c. There is no God like Yahweh because He is a covenant keeping God:
 - 1) He keeps **“covenant”** and **“lovingkindness”** (1b):
 - a) A covenant is a binding agreement between two parties, whereby both make promises and commitments to one another; it's more than a contract because it focuses on the relationship between the two parties more than the services to be rendered; in this case Solomon is referring to God's covenants with people, like Noah, Moses, Abraham, David and Israel
 - b) The Hebrew word for lovingkindness is a bit difficult to define in a single word because it combines elements of obligation, loyalty, faithfulness, kindness, grace, mercy and love; I often define it as covenant loyalty because it's all those words wrapped up into one, but it's typically reserved for those who are in a covenant relationship with God as we see here: **“to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart”** (1c)

- 2) As I mentioned earlier, it's pretty clear that Solomon's prayer was influenced or shaped by an understanding of God's word because these words come right out of Deuteronomy 7:9-12 (READ)
- 3) God's faithfulness to His covenants and His lovingkindness to His people are constant themes throughout the Old Testament (just a few more examples):
 - a) Isaiah 54:10: **"For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, And My covenant of peace will not be shaken," Says the LORD who has compassion on you."**
 - b) Daniel 9:4: **"I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,"**
 - c) Nehemiah 1:5: **"said, "I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments,"**
 - d) "lovingkindness" occurs over 120 times in just the book of Psalms alone!
2. Solomon had seen this firsthand in not just his father David's life but his own:
 - a. We get a very simple recognition of this in v. 24 (RE-READ)
 - b. We also saw Solomon reflect on this twice before:
 - 1) The first time was when the LORD appeared to him at Gibeon (READ 3:6-9)
 - 2) The second time was when he spoke to Israel right before he began to pray (READ 8:14-21)
3. After reflecting on God's covenant loyalty, He then called on God to hold fast to what remained in His covenant with David (RE-READ 25-26):
 - a. One of the promises the LORD made with David was that he would never lack a descendent to sit on the throne of Israel as long as his sons remained faithful to the LORD
 - b. David reminded Solomon of this promise in 1 Kings 2:4
 - c. Solomon now prays that the LORD would **"confirm"** that which He had promised David (the Hebrew imperfect tense and Niphal stem here suggest an ongoing realization, e.g. "become a reality")

B. Solomon calls on the LORD to uphold his covenant with Israel (8:27-53)
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1. Solomon now turns his thoughts toward the LORD'S covenant with Israel as a nation:
 - a. He begins in the first 4 verses by calling on the LORD to be attentive to his and Israel's prayer
 - b. He then follows this up in the next 22 verses with specific scenarios or examples in which Israel may need to call upon the LORD and how Solomon hopes the LORD will respond
2. Let's begin with 27-30 where Solomon calls on the LORD to be attentive to his prayer and those of Israel (READ 8:27-30):
 - a. Solomon knew that the temple was symbolic of God's presence among Israel:
 - 1) If **"heaven and the highest heaven"** (27) could not contain the LORD, then how could an earthly temple?
 - 2) God's dwelling place is in heaven as he noted in v. 30
 - 3) Nonetheless, the LORD said, **"My name shall be there"** (29) which was another way of saying He would be there among His people

- 4) So, the temple symbolized this, but it also symbolized something more
- b. The temple was a reminder that when they would pray, the LORD would hear and respond to their prayers:
 - 1) Solomon called on the LORD to **“have regard”** to his prayer (vs. 28-30a) and the prayers of Israel (30b and following):
 - a) More literally: **“turn toward the prayer of your servant”**
 - b) Think of the word picture here; when someone speaks to us and we turn our heads toward them it implies we’re listening; it may even suggest we’re interested in what they’re saying <grin>
 - c) That’s the way Solomon is using it here: he wasn’t calling on God to just hear their prayers, but to be attentive to them, take them to heart, and to respond to them
 - d) This is also seen in the repetition he uses:
 - “Have regard to the prayer...”** (28a)
 - “Listen to the cry and to the prayer...”** (28b)
 - “Listen to the supplication of your servant and Your people Israel”** (30a)
 - “hear in heaven...hear and forgive”** (30b)
 - 2) Notice how Solomon relates the LORD’S regard for their prayer to the temple: RE-READ vs. 29-30 and notice how many times Solomon refers to the temple (**“this place”**)
3. Now, on to the scenarios or examples of when Israel will need to call upon the LORD and how Solomon hopes the LORD will respond:
 - a. Due to the number of verses, I am simply going to read them, and respond when finished
 - b. However, as we read through these verses, I want you to listen to the themes that Solomon repeats (READ 8:31-53 after points below):
 - 1) Notice the number of times Solomon refers to Israel sinning against God and suffering the consequences of that sin
 - 2) Notice the emphasis on Israel turning back to God, confessing their sin, and praying toward or in the direction of the temple
 - 3) Notice the repeated references to the LORD hearing their prayers from heaven and responding, including forgiving their sin
 - 4) Finally, notice the repeated references to God’s sovereign choice of Israel—giving them the land, choosing them, making them His people
 - c. What Solomon prays here is both reflective of Israel’s past and predictive of their future:
 - 1) We see a similar cycle of sin, calling out to God, repentance, and forgiveness in the book of Judges
 - 2) Solomon seemed to be keenly aware of Israel’s past and certainly doesn’t seem to think it’s all in the past; he knows they are bound to repeat the same habits and calls on God to hear them when they do cry out to Him in distress
 - 3) But, He also knows that if they repent, and cry out to the LORD, He will hear their prayers and forgive them; once again, this is right out of the Scriptures (READ Deuteronomy 30:1-10; similar in Leviticus 26:14-45)
 - d. The last thing I want to point out is the one scenario Solomon mentions that doesn’t have to do with Israel, but with foreigners (41-43):

- 1) Back in chapter 5 we saw how King Hiram's help in building the temple foreshadowed the inclusion of gentiles in God's redemptive plan
- 2) We see something similar here when Solomon calls on the LORD to hear and respond to the foreigner who comes to Jerusalem from a far off place and prays toward the temple (RE-READ 41-43)

C. Two takeaways

1. Just as the LORD was/is faithful to Israel, He is faithful to us:
 - a. Like Israel, we are in a covenant relationship with Jesus
 - b. Jesus referred to it as the new covenant which He instituted when He shed His blood on the cross:
 - 1) Jesus referred to this at the last supper (Luke 22:19-20): **“And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ 20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.”**
 - 2) The author of Hebrews dedicated over half of his epistle to discussing the new covenant—all of chapters 7-13!
 - 3) When we accept God's gift of salvation, by grace through faith, we become members/participants of this new covenant with God
 - c. The new covenant we have with God through Jesus' blood assures us that the same covenant loyalty God showed/s to Noah, Abraham, David, and Israel, He shows to us:
 - 1) Right in the middle of his discussion on the new covenant, the author of Hebrews wrote this, **“Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful”** (Hebrews 10:23)
 - 2) Paul reminded the Corinthians of the confidence they could have in Christ because of the new covenant (2 Corinthians 3:4-6): **“Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”**
 - 3) Paul wrote in Romans that nothing can destroy the covenant we have with the LORD and separate us from Him—**“neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”** (Romans 8:38-29)
2. Just as the LORD provided a means of hope and restoration for Israel when they sinned, He offers us the same hope:
 - a. Most of Solomon's prayer focused on Israel's sin and God's response when they would confess and return to Him; He was confident that the LORD would still hear and respond to Israel's prayers, forgive them, and restore the broken relationship
 - b. It's no different when it comes to our own struggle with sin; when we confess our sin the LORD listens and responds with forgiveness and restoration:
 - 1) 1 John 1:9: **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteous.”**

- 2) 1 John 2:1: **“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;”**
- 3) Jesus didn’t forgive or intercede for us only once; He continues to forgive and intercede for us:
 - a) Hebrews 7:25: **“Therefore he is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them”**
 - b) Romans 8:34: **“who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us”**