

# SOLOMON, THE WORSHIPING KING

**+ SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

God is faithful to provide forgiveness for people so that He might dwell with them.

**+ BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

1 Kings 6–9

**+ SETTING:**

Solomon had secured the throne. He was God’s chosen king of Israel. But he came to the office with a heavy expectation and task upon him—building God a temple. And so, the “Builder King” went to work assembling material and organizing labor to build a new place for God, as well as a palace for himself, that would showcase his extraordinary wisdom and wealth to all the world. But as Israel had learned before, handling the things of God isn’t always a safe endeavor. With the completion of the temple, some may have been wondering if God would approve of this house built for Him.

# DAY 1

## READ:

1 Kings 6:1–8:13

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 Kings 8:10-13

## NOTES

## VOICES from THE CHURCH

"The foundation of worship in the heart, therefore, is not *emotional* ('I feel full of worship' or 'The atmosphere is so worshipful'). Actually, it is *theological*. Worship is not something we 'work up,' it is something that 'comes down' to us, from the character of God."<sup>1</sup>

-Sinclair Ferguson

They were stopped in their tracks. Wanting to continue their service and work of worship, they were completely hindered from doing anything more. The priests had taken the ark of the covenant and set it in the holy of holies. As they moved back through the holy place to the outer courts, the dark cloud heavy with the glory of God descended and filled every space in the temple facility. All they could do was stand and be amazed at the presence of God. God was with them!

We might be jealous to have this experience in our own lives. We want to see God's presence in visible form and be so overcome with awe that we can't do anything more. How real and meaningful and good would it be if God showed up with us like He did with them? Then we'd have a real worship experience.

Could it be that we are missing the bigger picture if we feel this kind of jealousy? What is to stop us today from giving praise and honor and glory to God because He actually is with us, even though we cannot visibly see Him? While we may long for and desire the visible, tangible, physical expressions of God's presence, we cannot ignore the greater reality of His infinite presence with His people now!

The good news is that we aren't required, nor is it necessary, to travel to Jerusalem to offer praise and glory to God. We don't have to look for a dark cloud and approach the Lord with fear and trembling. God is with us! Because of Christ's ascension to the Father and the sending of the Holy Spirit, God is with us in every place at all times. We can stop in our tracks right now and praise and worship God because He is with us!

**What are some ways you can worship and praise God wherever you are?**

# DAY 2

## READ:

1 Corinthians 3

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

NOTES



### ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #81: TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit indwells the church, both individually and corporately (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 12:13). As the temple of the Holy Spirit, we live our lives differently than before, bearing the virtuous fruit that comes only by the indwelling work of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). This indwelling work of the Spirit also equips individual members of the church with gifts for the work of the ministry (1 Cor. 12:11).

One of the most impressive buildings from the ancient world still standing today is the Colosseum in Rome. It's a monument to the skill and ingenuity of the designers and builders of the city. Its structure is imposing and overwhelming. How ancient builders could craft and design a stadium that held tens of thousands without the help of modern building equipment is astounding. The stadium emanates a sense of history. We are impressed by the gladiator battles and chariot races that our minds imagine as we are looking at the remains still standing. It's a temple to an ancient time.

The lack of the temple in Jerusalem today may seem like a loss to us. We cannot go to the city and look on an ancient, preserved, and still glorious structure and be transported to the times of David and Solomon. Very few ruins remain (and none of Solomon's temple) to inspire and move our imaginations to see the sacrifices on the altar and the priests working to facilitate the worship of God. We seem to be without a sacred place to astound us with the glory of God.

Yet the apostle Paul shakes us out of that disappointment by reminding us that we are God's temple and that the Spirit of God lives in us (1 Cor 3:16). We the church, God's people, both collectively and individually, are the dwelling place of God. His Spirit indwells every believer. Together we are called to be the sacred and holy place where God's grace is known. We are the monuments of His grace to inspire and motivate a watching world to seek the Lord. We are to live with holy love and mercy toward one another and our neighbors so that God is glorified in all things. The grace and glory of God are to emanate from us to everyone we meet. God doesn't need a building in Jerusalem. He has a people to display His glory. He doesn't live in a room constructed by human hands. He dwells within us and is making us holy for His glory in everything. We are God's temple.

**How are you displaying the presence and holiness of God as His temple to those around you?**

# DAY 3

## READ:

1 Kings 8:14-21

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 Kings 8:14-21

## NOTES

Solomon says it like it is. Perhaps he inserts himself too much into the story, makes a bigger deal about his role in all of it, but he's honest. He's out of line, but he's right. God has kept His promises. He has fulfilled His word in every promise, and Solomon gets to see the highest point of the Old Testament covenants fulfilled.

The fulfillment of God's promises to Israel should encourage us. God spoke to David and laid out to him that his son would build the temple. God would see to it! Even though David's desire was to do it for the Lord, the son would bring the fulfillment of God's word. Solomon knew his place in the story. He knew he was the promised son to David. He knew it was his job to build that temple. And so, he did it. And God's promises were fulfilled and kept.

It's worth considering, then, what God will do with the promises made to us. What do we actually believe about the promise that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Rom. 10:13)? Or what about the promise that all who see the Son and believe in Him will have eternal life (John 6:40)?

We should let Solomon's candor be our confidence. He was so assured that God had fulfilled His promise to his father David (and rightly so) that he couldn't help but boast about the Lord's works (1 Kings 8:20). If God fulfilled his promise to David and Israel, how much more will He keep His promises to us because of what Jesus has done. The promises of Jesus are true—they will not fail.

If you have believed in Jesus, then you don't have to wrestle with fear and worry about God's gift of salvation to you. Christ has died to fulfill these promises and secure your life in Him. If you call on the name of the Lord, you will be saved. If you believe in Jesus, you will have eternal life. Take those promises to the bank!

**In what ways might you be tempted to doubt the promises of God for you as a believer in Jesus?**

# DAY 4

## READ:

1 Kings 8:22-40

## FOCAL PASSAGE:

1 Kings 8:33-40

## NOTES

What do you think God will say when you confess your sin? Will God hear you? Whenever we are aware of our sin and rebellion against God, we feel the distance and discord our sin has created between us and God. Our enemy likes to accuse us and tell us God won't take us back, that He won't heal us and forgive our sins.

Solomon's prayer here is a simple yet profound plea that God would forgive the sins of His people. The condition was that Israel would come to God with their sins, especially when their circumstances revealed they had wandered from God. When the foreign enemy defeated them in battle, or a drought dried up all the wells, or when they were without food because of a severe famine, or even when a plague hit and everyone was sick, these were the times when Israel would realize they had transgressed God's law. These were the times they could come and cry out for God's mercy.

The request of Solomon was that God would hear their prayers and forgive their sins. Solomon banked his hope and made his plea to God on the very glory and name of God. If God forgave them, they would fear Him. If God showed His grace, He would be loved and worshiped even more. It seems to be a no-brainer. Of course, God will forgive so that He will be adored and exalted and glorified. Of course, God will cleanse His penitent people when they seek His mercy and grace.

This prayer leans right into the very heart of God and shows us how good and safe and loving God will be when we come to Him with our sin. Solomon asked that God would forgive, act, and give according to His infinite knowledge (1 Kings 8:39), and He does. How do we know this? Because He acted by sending His Son, Jesus, to forgive our sins and be the gift of righteousness to reconcile us back to Himself. Forgiveness is found in Jesus's love for us. So today, take your sin to God. He's ready to forgive you!

**What barriers might be keeping you from confessing your sin to God and seeking His forgiveness? How will you overcome them?**

# DAY 5

**READ:**

**1 Kings 8:41-66**

**FOCAL PASSAGE:**

**1 Kings 8:41-43**

NOTES

Are you ever amazed at how God saves the people we would least expect to be saved? Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8:41-43 exposes how territorial our prayers can be. We expect God's mercy to fall on the people who "get it," like we do. Such people look like us, think like us, dress like us, and pretty much fit neatly into our vision of who should be saved. But when God rescues someone who didn't vote like us, or who has a rough past, or doesn't have the same ethnic background as us, we're a bit taken aback.

Yet the good news of God's forgiveness is for everyone! King Solomon recognized the temple would be a place that would attract all kinds of people. Even the non-Jewish, pagan, idol-worshipping, barbaric sinners of the surrounding nations would be curious about this architectural masterpiece and the God that Israel worshiped. They would have heard the stories of the exodus from Egypt, the crossing on dry land through the Red Sea, even God's work to destroy all of Israel's enemies and give them this land. They'd be curious about the God of Israel and His attitude toward them.

Solomon asked God to forgive the foreigner who came and sought God's mercy. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) wasn't a New Testament invention. Throughout the Bible, God's people were expected to live in such a way that the outsider could come to God and find forgiveness. God has purposed that His praise be declared by every tribe, language, people, and nation (Rev. 5:9). Christ died to secure worship for Himself from every people group on earth.

The temple was open for the nations to come and pray and be forgiven. This begs the question: Are our hearts and churches open for all people to come and meet Jesus and be forgiven? Are we open to the stranger, the foreigner, the people who aren't like us and don't think, smell, live, vote, and dress like we do? Will they find God's grace in your life and in your church?

**Who are the outsiders you will pray for today to come to Christ and be forgiven?**

# GROUP

NOTES

## VOICES from THE CHURCH

"Knowing that God always does what he says is very reassuring. He will remain faithful even when we are no longer on earth and unable to witness the accomplishments of his promises. Just as God is faithful, he expects us to be faithful . . . Let us be faithful in serving God, giving to his work, witnessing to and loving others, and proclaiming his faithfulness."<sup>2</sup>

-Africa Study Bible

### **POINT 1: The temple hosts God's presence with His people** (1 Kings 8:10-13).

After the completion of the temple, a cloud filled the temple, a visible manifestation of God's \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ with His people.

**?** When have you felt God's presence in your life?

### **ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE #81: TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Holy Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ the church, both individually and corporately (1 Cor. 3:16-17; 12:13). As the temple of the Holy Spirit, we live our lives differently than before, bearing the virtuous \_\_\_\_\_ that comes only by the indwelling work of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). This indwelling work of the Spirit also \_\_\_\_\_ individual members of the church with gifts for the work of the \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Cor. 12:11).

**?** What similarities and differences do you see between Solomon's temple and the church as the temple of the Holy Spirit?

### **POINT 2: The temple declares God's faithfulness to His people** (1 Kings 8:14-21).

Solomon blessed the people and blessed God, recounting God's \_\_\_\_\_ to His people in making and keeping His \_\_\_\_\_.

**?** Why was retelling the story of God's covenant with David important?

Although Solomon often referred to himself at the conclusion of this blessing, he rightly saw his place on the \_\_\_\_\_ and his part in the building of the \_\_\_\_\_ as the Lord's fulfillment of His promise.

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**POINT 3: The temple depicts God's forgiveness for His people** (1 Kings 8:33-43).

In dedicating the temple, Solomon asked God to \_\_\_\_\_ the prayers of His people in and toward the temple and to \_\_\_\_\_ Israel's sins. He further prayed for \_\_\_\_\_ who would come to the temple to find God's grace and mercy so that all the world would \_\_\_\_\_ God.

 **How should Solomon's prayer help instruct our prayers?**

## MY RESPONSE

Because we know that God dwells with us in Jesus Christ, we live in devotion and obedience to God so that the original purpose of the temple can be fulfilled: the people of the earth will know our God is King.

- **HEAD:** How does the presence of God with Israel at the temple give you hope for your future with God?
- **HEART:** What are some ways you can grow stronger in your belief in and understanding of God's great love for you?
- **HANDS:** How will you live as "a temple of the living God" before those who don't know Jesus? How might non-Christians see and experience the grace and mercy of Jesus by the way you live?

## VOICES from THE CHURCH

"The mark of the true church is an expanding witness to the presence of God: first to our families, then to others in the church, then to our neighborhood, then to our city, then the country, and ultimately the whole earth. May God give us grace to go out into the world as his extending temple and spread God's presence by reflecting it until it finally fills the entire earth."<sup>3</sup>

-G. K. Beale