



## Unit .12

### Session .03

# A Son Builds a Temple

#### Scripture



**1 Kings 8:10-14,  
20-21,54-61**

**10** When the priests came out of the holy place, the cloud filled the LORD's temple, **11** and because of the cloud, the priests were not able to continue ministering, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple. **12** Then Solomon said: The LORD said that he would dwell in total darkness. **13** I have indeed built an exalted temple for you, a place for your dwelling forever. **14** The king turned around and blessed the entire congregation of Israel while they were standing. ... **20** The LORD has fulfilled what he promised. I have taken the place of my father David, and I sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised. I have built the temple for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. **21** I have provided a place there for the ark, where the LORD's covenant is that he made with our ancestors when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. ... **54** When Solomon finished praying this entire prayer and petition to the LORD, he got up from kneeling before the altar of the LORD, with his hands spread out toward heaven,

**55** and he stood and blessed the whole congregation of Israel with a loud voice: **56** "Blessed be the LORD! He has given rest to his people Israel according to all he has said. Not one of all the good promises he made through his servant Moses has failed. **57** May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our ancestors. May he not abandon us or leave us **58** so that he causes us to be devoted to him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commands, statutes, and ordinances, which he commanded our ancestors. **59** May my words with which I have made my petition before the LORD be near the LORD our God day and night. May he uphold his servant's cause and the cause of his people Israel, as each day requires. **60** May all the peoples of the earth know that the LORD is God. There is no other! **61** Be wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD our God to walk in his statutes and to keep his commands, as it is today."

## Intro Options



**Main Point:**  
**God has always  
desired to dwell  
among His people.**

### Option 1

Tell your students to imagine that a generous donor has granted their church a huge sum of money. The donor has specified that part of that money is to go toward making a monument to be put up somewhere on the church grounds. This monument, which the donor wants your youth group to design, should do three things: 1) it should show God's presence; 2) it should show God's faithfulness; 3) it should advance God's mission.

Give your students some time to come up with a few designs for this monument. Money is no object; this monument can be a few feet tall, or it can be the size of a building, like the Washington or Jefferson monuments in Washington, DC.

Let them share their designs and explain them. Point out what's good in their designs. Then talk about how God already had a "monument" with these three purposes built many years ago: Solomon's temple.

### Option 2

Ask your students to think of the coolest building ever. It can be actual or fictional; it can still be extant or long-since torn down. It could be anything from the Winchester Mystery House to the Versailles Palace to a Fortnite building. If your students have the ability to produce a picture of their building (e.g., on a smartphone), let them. What do they find so cool about these buildings?

If you can, use some of their reasons for choosing their building to segue into Solomon's temple (e.g., that building is beautiful, but Solomon's temple would be filled with the beauty of God). Solomon's temple would be any good ancient Jew's "coolest building ever," and today's lesson will talk about why.


# TEACHING PLAN

Having seen the beginning of Solomon's reign in Session 1 and his frame of mind at the end of his life in Session 3, we will now jump back to the high point of Solomon's reign: the construction of the temple. After 480 years, the portable tabernacle would finally been replaced with a permanent temple.

## Read 1 Kings 8:10-14.



If there ever was a builder, it was Solomon. Solomon wasn't just a builder, or even a serious builder, he was a prolific builder. During his forty-year reign, Solomon built a palace (1 Kings 7:1-12), cities (1 Kings 9; 2 Chron. 8), a navy (1 Kings 9:26), and a massive army (1 Kings 10:26). Solomon was the king God had warned the people about (1 Sam. 9:10-18), a king who worked his people hard to finance and complete all of his building efforts (1 Kings 12:4). However, of all Solomon's building projects, none matched the temple, what he is best known for. More chapters are dedicated to the temple, its furnishings, and its dedication than any other subject in Kings and Chronicles (1 Kg. 6; 7:13–8:65; 2 Chron. 2–7). The temple would stand for four hundred years, and it would be the only building rebuilt after the exile.

We see the reason for such an emphasis on the temple in verse 10: after the temple was completed, God's presence, represented by a thick cloud, filled the temple. The temple wasn't just another building, another in a long list of monuments to Solomon's fame. The temple was built to add to God's fame, to be a tangible symbol of God's presence with His people. And this presence was so overwhelming that the priests couldn't even continue ministering. Can you imagine being in a worship service where God's glory was so evident—so weighty—that the pastor had to leave the room because he felt the fullness of God's holy presence? That's how it was for the priests when they came out of the inner sanctuary, where the altar of incense, the bread of the Presence, and the ten golden lampstands were kept (1 Kings 7:48-49). The language here reminds us of Exodus 40:34-35 when the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle and not even Moses was able to enter. 

- **In what ways do you see people try to honor God's name today? How do you try to honor God's name?**
- **Share about a time when you sensed the reality of God's presence. What was it about that time that convinced you it was the Spirit working?**

## Read 2 Kings 8:20-21.



Notice that Solomon was careful not to say that he was building a house for God. Look at what he said in verse 20b and 21. He says the temple was for the "name" of the Lord, providing a place for the ark.

The phrase "the house of the Lord" was used often in the Old Testament, of both the tabernacle (Deut. 23:18, Judg. 19:18) and the temple (1 Chron. 22:14). Even after the first temple was destroyed, the exiles returned to build "the house of the Lord" under Zerubbabel's leadership (Ezra 1:3).

# COMMENTARY

**Main Point:**  
**God has always  
desired to dwell  
among His people.**

## 1 Kings 8

**10.** This is not the first we see of this cloud; it was prevalent throughout the Book of Exodus. We saw it at the beginning of the Israelites' journey through the wilderness when the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to lead them during the day and in a pillar of fire to give them light at night (Ex. 13:21). The cloud not only illustrated the glory of the Lord filling the place, but also the persistent theme we see in Scripture of God wanting to dwell among His people. In fact, here are some other selected passages that summarize how God is seen as dwelling among His people.

Gen. 1–3. (Given the length of these chapters, you may just want to provide a summary for your students). God walked with Adam and Eve in the garden before their sin resulted in banishment from God's presence.

Ex. 29:42–46. God gave Moses intricate details for the tabernacle and the ark in order to establish His presence among Israel and meet with them regularly.

Ezek. 10:18. When Israel failed in their faithfulness to God's covenant, the most severe form of judgment from the Lord was removing Himself from the temple.

Matt. 1:23. God's promise to revisit His people and establish them once again is fulfilled in Jesus, who was called "Immanuel, which is translated 'God is with us.'"

Rev. 21:3. At the end of history, when all things are set right, we read this promise from Revelation: "God's dwelling is with humanity, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God."

The great hope of the Christian life is not getting things from God; it is getting God. This is a God who wants to be known and wants us to know His presence.

## 99 Essential Doctrines (p. 96, DDG)

### God is Immanent

When we say that God is immanent, we mean that God is personable and relatable to those made in His image, while remaining completely distinct and unique from all of His creation. It means that God is not a distant deity (as imagined by the deist) who only sits on His heavenly throne with no interaction, but instead, He is a personal God who created people in His image to be in personal relationship with Him.

# TEACHING PLAN

But nowhere does Solomon suggest that the temple will be God's dwelling place. The temple was not designed to provide a place for God to live, as if He were to be confined within its walls. Instead, the temple, like the tabernacle, was to reveal to the Israelites, as well as the world, that God was not absent from the earth. He may have seemed far off, but He was not.

**Read 1 Kings 8:54-61.**




As he began his prayer in 8:22, Solomon stood. But at some point, he must have fallen to his knees in worship, because verse 54 says he got up. We might wonder which of the seven petitions in verses 31-49 caused him to fall to his knees. Here, though, Solomon rose again to bless the congregation by blessing the Lord. When God is praised, people are blessed.

Solomon first praised God for giving rest to his people. Without such a rest, Solomon would not have been able to stand before his people and offer the prayer that preceded and the blessings that followed. Also, instead of speaking of God's promises to "the house of Israel," he pointed to God's promises "through his servant Moses." Solomon saw the completion of the temple not just as the fulfillment of God's promise to his father David (1 Kings 8:19-20), but also as the fulfillment of God's promise to Moses, that God would lead His people out of Egyptian captivity into a new land (Ex. 3:8). Solomon wanted the Israelites to see that what they were looking on that day, the temple in the promised land, was promised to them by God many generations before. They were not just looking at a beautiful building—they were looking upon the beautiful fulfillment of God's plan to deliver His people.

## ▪ How has God given you spiritual rest in your life? Why is that important?

The New Testament teaches that Jesus is the true temple of God and that as His followers, we also are the temple of God. God dwells in His people through His Holy Spirit.

According to 1 Peter 2:4-5, we are now priests who offer sacrifices to God. God's people no longer have to stand outside a temple. God now meets with us as we gather in His name. The presence of God is manifested where His people are since the Spirit resides in our hearts.

Unfortunately, many Christians attend worship gatherings every Sunday and fail to encounter the presence and majesty of God through worship, prayer, giving, and listening to the Word of God preached. Our hearts are filled with distractions from our phones, other responsibilities, and anxiety about the week ahead. But if what Peter says is true, then when we gather with God's people we are engaging in the most climactic event of our week. 

- **Talk honestly about your attitude toward gathering for worship on Sundays. What are some things you can do to prepare for worship to make it more meaningful and edifying?**
- **If we are the temple of God today, then we are to represent God to the world. What should our identity as God's temple communicate to those around us?**

# COMMENTARY

**Main Point:**  
God has always  
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among His people.

## 1 Kings 8

**57-60.** Verses 57-60 serve as the benediction of Solomon's grand prayer of dedication. His petitions taught the Israelites three critical truths, which are just as important for us today.

1) God's people need His presence (v. 57). It is easy to look back on what God has done—how good, faithful, and present He has been—and worry that He is not, or will not, be just as good, just as faithful, and just as present in our lives.

2) The ability to be devoted to God comes from God (v. 58). It is the Lord's continued presence with us and His faithful work in us that "causes us to be devoted to him."

3) All people will know the Lord is God (v. 60). We have seen that Solomon pointed the people back to Moses to show how the temple fulfilled God's promises.

### Activity

Have your students imagine that your church wants them to make today's lesson into triptychs to be put on the tables in your fellowship hall (a triptych is a three-paneled display that folds together like you see on the tables at Cracker Barrel).

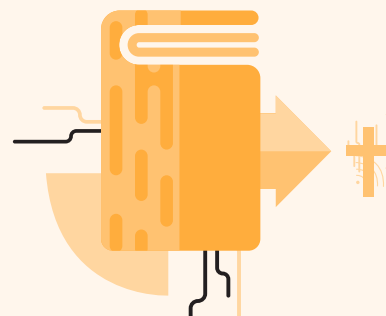
Break the students into groups or individuals, whichever they prefer, and give each group a piece of paper and drawing utensils. Tell them to fold their paper into thirds to make the triptych.

Assign each group one of three ideas (the temple hosts God's presence; the temple declares God's faithfulness; the temple advances God's mission). Now, on each leaf of the triptych, the group is to depict that idea for a different "temple": the first leaf will show Solomon's temple; the second leaf will show Jesus; the third leaf will show the present-day church. For instance, if a group got "the temple advances God's mission," their first panel will be a graphic showing Solomon's temple advancing God's mission; the middle panel will be a graphic showing Jesus advancing God's mission; the third panel will be a graphic showing the church advancing God's mission. Remember they can use captions.

Give them some time to make their triptychs and then present them. What good ideas have they shown?

## (p. 98, DDG) Christ Connection

The temple was to be a place where the faithful presence of God would be experienced so that the nations would know the Lord is God. Jesus spoke of Himself as God's Temple, and in His life, death, and resurrection, He was faithful to God's name, embodied God's presence, and extended God's mission.



# Our Mission

God's Story has always been designed to connect with our story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own. Suggested answers to these questions can be found on the right-hand side of the page for leaders.

## Head



**What motivates you to serve God: what you can do for Him, or what He has done for you?**

**What are some "God-sized" goals and ambitions you have? How will you, like Solomon, spread the fame of God's name in your life?**

## Heart



**What are some day-to-day experiences when you can anticipate the presence and glory of God?**

**How can you seek God's glory in all of those things?**

## Hands



**How does God demonstrate His presence in the world today?**

**How should we live in light of God's indwelling us to fulfill His mission on earth?**

**Main Point:**  
**God has always  
desired to dwell  
among His people.**



## Head

God's promise, made years before to his father David, forms the background for Solomon's prayer of dedication of the temple here (1 Kings 8:22-61). Notice Solomon's humility. He acknowledged that his ascension to the throne over Israel was not because of his own strength or wisdom but because God was keeping His promise to David—the promise to establish a house for David. Twice in verse 20, the emphasis is on God's promise, not on what Solomon had achieved.

We are reminded here that any good we do is the result of God working in us, and not because of what we bring to the table. We can, and we should, work to bring glory to God. But we are only able to express faithfulness to God because He has already expressed faithfulness to us. Our work for Him is a result of His work in us. And as we work, we do so knowing that our effort is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58), not because of who we are or what we do, but because of who God is and what He has promised.



## Heart

You can imagine how the Israelites must have felt and the emotions that were invoked upon seeing God's glory fill the temple. The sight of the finished temple would not only have drawn their attention and affections towards God, but seeing God's indwelling would have only added to that experience, resulting in genuine worship. The same should be true of Christians from week to week as well. No matter the place, whether in prayer on the bedroom floor or sitting in the pew at church listening to a sermon, Christians should expect and anticipate God's presence and glory to manifest in their lives.



## Hands

As Christians, we are now the temple of God on the earth. God indwells us and fills us (Eph. 2:18-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-5) as His missional people. God called us and chose us for the purpose of representing Him on the earth and spreading His fame to the nations. As we think of this great task before us, we must understand that it starts with ordinary Christians having ordinary conversations with ordinary people. It starts with you walking across the classroom and befriending a student you don't know. It starts when you give up time and comfort for the sake of non-Christians. It starts by taking a risk to ask a classmate what he or she thinks about Christianity. It starts with you choosing each day to live your life on mission and being available for whatever God wants to do through you.