

1 Kings 8-9 • Chapter Study

INTRO

The temple which had been planned & prepared for by David, was built by his son Solomon, the 3rd king of Israel.

As we saw last week, it took 7 years to build it & it was a truly breath-taking structure.

It was made of massive blocks of nearly white limestone trimmed with gold on the outside & completely paneled with cedar overlaid with gold on the inside so that no stone showed.

II. SOLOMON'S REIGN • 2:13-11:43

I. *Dedication Of The Temple* • Ch. 8

1. Installing the ark • vs. 1-9

¹Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which is Zion.

Most of the furniture for the temple was *remade*, except one piece – the *ark of the covenant*.

The ark had attained an epic reputation as being *utterly sacred*.

It was the *heart* of the temple, without which the temple was *just another building*.

It would take the ark's placement in the Holy of holies for the temple to *truly become THE temple*.

²Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with King Solomon at the feast in the month of Ethanim, [September-October = Tabernacles] which is the seventh month.

V. 1 makes it clear by “all the men of Israel” doesn't mean every single male – it means all the *leaders* of the nation.

³So all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.

⁴Then they brought up the ark of the LORD, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that were in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. ⁵Also 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. ⁶Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy *Place*, under the wings of the cherubim. ⁷For the cherubim spread *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. ⁸The poles extended so that the ends of the poles could be seen from the holy *place*, in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day.

This means this was written when Solomon's temple still stood, so contrary to modern liberal scholars who say this wasn't written till long *after* the Babylonian captivity, which took place nearly 500 years AFTER Solomon's time.

That the writer says this indicates he was probably a priest who'd been into the holy place and seen the poles sticking through the curtains separating the Holy of holies from the outer sanctuary.

⁹Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

By this time, the pot of manna & Aaron's staff that had budded had been removed from the ark & all that was left was it's most *important contents* – the 2 tablets containing the 10 commandments.

2. The glory of God comes • vs. 10-13

¹⁰And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, ¹¹so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

The parallel passage in Chronicles tells us the installation of the ark in the Holy of holies was attended by the most intense worship on the part of the priests.

As soon as the ark was in place & the priests backed out, the *Shekinah*, the manifest-presence of God's glory, appeared & filled the temple.

God's presence was so pervasive, the people could do nothing but fall on their faces & worship.

¹²Then Solomon spoke: "The LORD said He would dwell in the dark cloud. ¹³I have surely built You an exalted house, and a place for You to dwell in forever."

Solomon reminded the people how God's presence had been manifested among their ancestors in the Exodus; in just this way, a pillar of smoke.

What happened in the days of Moses was happening again, *signaling God's acceptance* of the temple as His own. *Solomon welcomes Him to it.*

3. Solomon's blessing • vs. 14-21

¹⁴Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. ¹⁵And he said: "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David, and with His hand has fulfilled it, saying, ¹⁶'Since the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house, that My name might be there; but I chose David to be over My people Israel.' ¹⁷Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. ¹⁸But the LORD said to my father David, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. ¹⁹Nevertheless you shall not build the

temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.’ ²⁰So the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke; and I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised; and I have built a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. ²¹And there I have made a place for the ark, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD which He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

Solomon wanted to make sure the people understood what was happening *had been foretold* & stood within the *will* of God.

He was setting their experience in the counsel of God – *locating* what they were seeing & hearing in God’s Word.

This is important because *not everything supernatural* is from God.

Satan is able to work counterfeit miracles, so we need to be on guard.

What had just happened was so totally of the Lord it was *stunning*, but Solomon showed himself to be a good & wise leader in that *he placed it within the context of the Scriptures*.

4. Solomon’s prayer • vs. 22-53

Now Solomon is going to make a prayer *to* the Lord *on behalf of* Israel.

The *theme* is a request for God to show mercy when Israel *returns* to Him *after* turning away.

Solomon knew from his people’s chequered past that they were a stiff-necked & rebellious lot who were prone to wandering away from God.

²²Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven; ²³and he said: “LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God in heaven above or on earth below like You, who keep *Your* covenant and mercy with *Your* servants who walk before You with all their hearts. ²⁴You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled *it* with Your hand, as *it is* this day.

This is the 2nd time Sol has used this phrase to describe God; He has “spoken with His mouth & done with His hand.” He said the same in v. 15.

It’s an idiom which speaks of integrity, faithfulness, fidelity.

What God says, He does. What He promises, He keeps.

It’s based on this fidelity of God to His Word His people are called to be marked by integrity.

We are called to be *like* God in terms of our moral character.

Since he keeps His promises, we must keep ours.

What this means is that not only ought we do what we say we’ll do, but before we make an oath or give a promise, we need to exercise the wisdom of discretion to make sure that we intend to do what we say.

That we have the *capacity* to keep our promises.

²⁵Therefore, LORD God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, ‘You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their

way, that they walk before Me as you have walked before Me.’²⁶ And now I pray, O God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David my father.

Based on God’s past faithfulness in fulfilling His promises, Solomon asks that He continue to fulfill that which He has promised.

This is a great way to pray – to *remember* God’s past faithfulness then to lift His promises before Him & ask that He make good on what He’s said.

God *delights* in our learning what He has promised, then asking that He perform His Word in our present time of need so **THAT** he can demonstrate His faithfulness to us in a personal & specific way.

Sol’s thoughts now go in a *different* direction.

How is it God would *condescend* to inhabit a temple when even the skies cannot contain Him?

27“But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! **28**Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: **29**that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, ‘My name shall be there,’ that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. **30**And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive. **31**“When anyone sins against his neighbor, and is forced to take an oath, and comes *and* takes an oath before Your altar in this temple, **32**then hear in heaven, and act, and judge Your servants, condemning the wicked, bringing his way on his head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.

Sol asks that *God’s righteousness* will be the basis of *civil law* among the people of Israel.

33 “When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and when they turn back to You and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in this temple, **34** then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to their fathers.

Solomon was well aware of the words of Moses in Deut. when he enumerated the *blessings* that would come on Israel’s *faithfulness* along with the *woes* that would come as a result of her *turning from* God.

When God’s discipline of Israel comes through defeated in battle & the people repent, coming to the temple to pray, may God hear & restore His protection.

35“When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them,

36then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance.

When God uses drought to discipline His wayward children & they return, may He restore the rains.

37“When there is famine in the land, pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers; when their enemy besieges them in the land of their cities; whatever plague or whatever sickness *there is*;

38whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple: **39**then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men), **40**that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which You gave to our fathers.

Whatever Israel’s distress that comes as a result of turning from God, when they demonstrate sincere repentance by coming to the temple to renew their covenant with God, may He show special favor & restore them.

Solomon is *not* trying to turn the temple into some kind of *magic relic* they can rub like a rabbit’s foot to get goodies from God.

The temple was unique in that it was *the place* God had *manifested* His presence & glory.

It was a moment in history when *His glory became visible* – invading time & space, & showing to all that He was real & had entered into covenant with Israel.

The temple was really nothing more than *a contact point* for people as they came back into fellowship with God.

<p>You see – It’s all about <i>relationship</i>! <i>Everything about the temple screamed God’s desire to be in relationship with them.</i></p>
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41“Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who *is not* of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name’s sake **42**(for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, **43**hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as *do* Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.

God’s desire was for *all people* to come into relationship with Him, not just the Jews.

Israel was simply supposed to be *the model* for others to see His offer & love.

Of course we know how Israel misunderstood this mission God appointed her and hoarded their knowledge of God.

They came to *despise* Gentiles instead of seeing them as people God loved & wanted to reach through Israel.

What's sad is that so many Christians today are making the very same mistake.

They take pride in their being the "chosen few."

They look at the lost with disdain & avoid them at every turn lest they become polluted by their unbelief.

At the dedication of the temple, Sol asked that when Gentiles witnessed Israel's blessing by God and came to the temple to check out the cause/source of that blessing, God would reveal Himself to them & draw them to Himself.

May our lost family, friends, a& neighbors see the blessing of God so abundantly on our lives that they come to church to check it out and realize God's love & offer is real to them!

44"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, **45**then hear in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. **46**"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; **47**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'; **48**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: **49**then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause, **50**and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You; and grant them compassion before those who took them captive, that they may have compassion on them **51**(for they *are* Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of the iron furnace), **52**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. **53**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."

Sol looks forward to the greatest national calamity of all – when Israel would lose their land & be carried away captive.

When you read Daniel's prayer in ch. 9 you realize he was *applying* these words of Solomon as he prayed for the return of the Jews to their land.

5. Solomon's blessing • vs. 54-61

⁵⁴And 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. ⁵⁵Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying: ⁵⁶“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. ⁵⁷May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us, ⁵⁸that 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. ⁵⁹And 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, ⁶⁰that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; *there is no other.* ⁶¹Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day.”

Just as a rudder steers a huge ship, so our hearts determine our course in life.

This is why what Sol says in v. 58 is so important –

May He incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways.

How we *need* to pray for the grace of God to *seal* our hearts in loyalty to God.

We sing a song,

Prone to wander, Lord I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.

Here's my heart Lord, take & seal it, seal it for Thy courts above.

For some time now my consistent prayer is, “Father, produce within me a great longing, desire; a thirst & hunger for You.”

6. Sacrifice & celebration • vs. 62-66

⁶²Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. ⁶³And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. ⁶⁴On 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. ⁶⁵At that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath [Way up north] to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, 7 days and 7 *more* days—14 days.

This was a week before the Feast of Tabernacles, then the feast itself which lasted another week.

There was a continuous parade of people from all over Israel who came to see

the temple & enjoy the offerings that were made.

66On the 8th 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.

This 8th day was the day after the end of the Feast of Tabernacles.

This is the apex, the epitome of Israel's Golden Age right here.

Everything is good & right because Solomon is at this point right with God.

But God knows the future, so He comes to Sol with a warning . . .

J. God Appears To Solomon Again • 9:1-9

1And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he wanted to do, **2**that the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. **3**And the LORD said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. **4**Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, *and* if you keep My statutes and My judgments, **5**then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' **6***But* if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments *and* My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, **7**then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. **8**And as *for* this house, *which* is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' **9**Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them.' "

God promised Solomon that if he and his descendants remained faithful to Him, their dynasty as the rulers of Israel would endure.

But if they turned away from Him, not only would they lose their dominion, but the entire nation would suffer.

Israel would either bear witness to the power & righteousness of God through blessings on her obedience or judgments on apostasy.

K. Hiram Displeased • 9:10-14

10Now it happened at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD and the king's house

¹¹(Hiram the king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress and gold, as much as he desired), *that* King Solomon then gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. ¹²Then Hiram went from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, but they did not please him. ¹³So he said, “What *kind of* cities are these which you have given me, my brother?” And he called them the land of Cabul, as they are to this day. ¹⁴Then Hiram sent the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold.

It's difficult sorting out what's going on here.

Galilee is the Israelite land that borders with Lebanon.

There was a long time friendship between Hiram, the king of Lebanon & the house of David.

Hiram sent lumber, gold, & skilled craftsmen to Solomon while Israel sent grain & oil to Lebanon in exchange.

In order to ensure continuing goodwill between the 2 nations, Sol gave 20 border settlements to Hiram.

Israel's influence was growing all over the Middle East at this time and by sheer weight of her wealth & power her borders were expanding.

It may have been that Solomon didn't want Hiram to think he would try & take any of Lebanon's territory by actually *giving up* some of Israel's along their common border.

If that was his intent, it was wrong because that territory was not Sol's to give away; the land belonged to God & had been portioned out to the tribes of Israel.

When Hiram went to inspect the settlements Solomon had given him, he put no value in them.

He called them *Cabul* = *Good-for-nothing*.

What's interesting about his assessment of these settlements is that virtually ALL of Galilee is prime real estate and great for raising both crops & herds.

It's well watered & lush.

What Hiram didn't like was probably the fact that none of these 20 settlements were well developed.

This was still a frontier & rather wild area; none of Solomon's vast building projects had been done here.

Despite his displeasure with the region, Hiram sent Sol 120 talents = 8400 lbs. of gold!

L. Solomon's projects • 9:15-28

1. Various projects • vs. 15-19

¹⁵And this *is* the reason for the labor force which King Solomon raised: to build the house of the LORD, his own house, the Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer.

We've already read about the massive labor force Solomon conscripted for his building projects – over 183,000 men – not including the slaves who were also used.

These all built

- the temple,
- Sol's palace complex with its 5 buildings,
- the Millo, which was a massive terraced retaining wall in the City of David,
- the wall around the now largely expanded city of Jerusalem.
- & the fortress cities of Hazor, Megiddo, & Gezer.
 - Hazor guarded the northern approach to Israel.
 - Megiddo protected the coastal route
 - Gezer was a major Canaanite city west of Jerusalem that had remained in Canaanite control until the time of Solomon.

16(Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer and burned it with fire, had killed the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and had given it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.)

Gezer was really the last major Canaanite center in Israel.

Pharaoh conquered it and gave it to Solomon as his daughter's wedding dowry.

17And Solomon built Gezer, Lower Beth Horon, 18Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land of Judah, 19all the storage cities that Solomon had, cities for his chariots and cities for his cavalry, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

Each of the locations mentioned here were at key locations to *control the trade routes* passing through Israel.

The rule of the ancient world is that whoever controls trade controls the world because of the influence they have on economics.

Solomon understood this so he moved to place strong fortresses at locations that would control the flow of trade between Africa, Europe & Asia.

2. The labor force • vs. 20-23

20All the people who were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not of the children of Israel— 21that is, their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the children of Israel had not been able to destroy completely— from these Solomon raised forced labor, as it is to this day. 22But of the children of Israel Solomon made no forced laborers, because they were men of war and his servants: his officers, his captains, commanders of his chariots, and his cavalry. 23Others were chiefs of the officials who were over Solomon's work: five hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people who did the work.

In ch. 4 we're told of the *men of Israel* Solomon *drafted* into the workforce, but these men weren't slaves – *they were paid* for their work. *THIS* group were slaves.

3. Pharaoh's daughter's house • v. 24

24But Pharaoh's daughter came up from the City of David to her house which Solomon had built for her. Then he built the Millo.

There's a bit of debate among scholars of just what the Millo was but the general consensus today is that it was a massive terraced retaining wall that was built to fill in a gully in the City of David.

This gully had reduced the useable space inside the old City of David so Solomon filled it in so there'd be more room to build.

4. Solomon's worship • v. 25

²⁵Now 3 times a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he had built for the LORD, and he burned incense with them on the altar that was before the LORD. So he finished the temple.

This doesn't mean he offered these sacrifices *personally* but that he *paid* for them & had the priests offer them on his behalf.

This verse is placed here to show that *at first*, Solomon's heart was loyal to the Lord. Too bad it didn't remain that way.

5. A fleet • vs. 26-28

²⁶King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. ²⁷Then Hiram sent his servants with the fleet, seamen who knew the sea, to work with the servants of Solomon. ²⁸And they went to Ophir, and acquired four hundred and twenty talents of gold from there, and brought it to King Solomon.

Historically, the Jews have shunned the sea.

They've rarely had a navy & were never even a minor maritime power, except in the time of Solomon.

Sol realized the importance of shipping in trade & fashioned a fleet of ships at the Red Sea port of Ezion Geber.

Once again, Hiram helped Solomon branch out into a new technology by sending some of his sailors & shipwrights to help Israel.

Using this fleet of ships, they sailed to a place called *Ophir*, probably India, where they acquired about 15 tons of gold through trade.