

1 Kings Ch 8

Ch 8 is an occasion of celebration, and consecration as we enter into the dedication of the temple that Solomon built to house the *ark* of the Lord and to be a dwelling place for the *name* of the Lord. And so the chapter starts out with Solomon commencing the occasion, and moves into the prayer of consecration, begins to wind down with the benediction of the congregation, and then ultimately closes out with the slew of sacrifices that followed after and really completed the dedication.

And it's been a few weeks since we've been here, but you recall that in our last study we sort of overviewed the building of the temple. And one thing we drew attention to was the overwhelming detail and complexity of it's structure, but yet at the same time we didn't spend much time contemplating those things but we just sort of brushed *over* it, drew attention *to* it, and then moved on. And the reason that is, is because the temple though obviously an incredibly significant aspect of biblical history, really isn't all that rich for you and me personally. Because though it was built as a place to come before God, and be a witness to the majesty of God, the scriptures really don't place much emphasis on the actual structure of the temple regarding it's personal application for us. But rather it points to the *tabernacle* as the structure to be studied. And so when we were in the book of Ex we spent considerable time in studying the details of the tabernacle because the bible is clear that the tabernacle and its various details are the type *of* and a model *after* the heavenly scene. And even message of the gospel, pictures of redemption, and the person of Jesus Christ are all found in the tabernacle, there was beautiful simplicity in the tabernacle, but there's radical complexity in the temple. And there are just some things about the temple that fall short when compared with the tabernacle outside of that, 1 lamp stand for the tabernacle, 10 for the temple, same thing with the table of showbread. There were 2 cherubim in the temple, each 15' tall with 15' wingspans overshadowing the ark, but they were merely overlaid with gold as opposed to being fashioned out of pure gold, they were olive wood at their core. And as to where Solomon hired skilled gentiles to help with the prep work of the temple because they were more skilled than the Jews, the tabernacle artisans were those whom we read were filled with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship. So the temple was in part constructed from the cultivated skill of man as to where the tabernacle we could say was a work of the Spirit. There were no windows in the Tabernacle, the glory of God was to be it's light, but in the Temple windows were placed in it, as if it were prepared in case the glory of God were to depart (and it did). But my point in all this is to say that though the temple was an awesome thing, it paled in comparison to the tabernacle, now if you were to stand them side by side, the tabernacle would've looked like a shack comparatively, but as to where man looks to the outward appearance, God looks to the heart. But that's why we didn't spend much time looking for types of *this* or shadows of *that* when reviewing the building of the temple, there are a few things, but overall, the tabernacle is the focus of those things.

Now in vs 38 of Ch 6 we see that it was the 8th month of the 11th yr that the temple was completed, which means it wasn't officially "open for business" until 11 months later, the 7th month of the following year. Because until the ark was in it's specified place, (the most holy place) the temple was ready to begin ministering in. Because the ark was the most important article in the temple, it housed the covenant, was covered by the Mercy Seat, and God had said, "...*there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are on the ark of the Testimony,*" Ex 25:22

And so Solomon has waited until it was time for the feast of tabernacles, that time when the people of Israel would be making a journey to Jerusalem anyway, and the whole idea of that feast was to remind them of God's faithfulness to them during the time of their wilderness wanderings. And how appropriate that that be the time to consecrate the temple, a permanent structure which spoke of God's granting them rest, no longer would they wander in the wilderness, but they had a home, and a permanent meeting place with God.

And apparently Solomon wanted this to be a pretty big shindig, a real *spectacular event*, and understandably so, and so he invited all the dignitaries of the nation, all the heads of state, of the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers and all. You might think of the opening ceremonies of an Olympic event or something.

Vs3-8

We note that the priests took up the ark, that is, they were the ones who transported it from its current location, to the temple. You recall that the 1st time David had the ark moved he didn't see what the word of God had to say about it and so someone got killed. Solomon has no intention of repeating that mistake and so he has the ark transported according to the instructions of God's Word. How important it is to seek out the direction of God's word when it comes to various situations and circumstances of our lives. So often we just shoot from the hip in a given situation and only wind up in a mess, but if we'd only see what the word of God has to say about it we could avoid so much heartbreak, and heartache. Solomon was careful to heed the word of God in transporting the ark.

And they also brought up the rest of the stuff, not just the ark, but the tabernacle of meeting itself along with the various articles such as the altar of incense, the golden lamp stand, the table of showbread, and the various furnishing that were in the tabernacle. And they were probably stored in the side rooms that were built for storage and housing priesthood around the temple. And when they placed the ark in the holy of holies, you were able to see the poles extended out into either entry point to the holy of holies from the holy place (that is there in the sanctuary once you had entered into the temple) but you couldn't see that from outside.

Vs9

Now as you read through the book of Exodus and the book of Numbers you see that also placed in the ark was a pot of manna that was to be preserved as a testimony to God's faithful provision while they wandered in the wilderness. And also Aaron's rod that budded confirming God's choosing his family for the priesthood was there as well as a witness against anyone who might challenge otherwise.

But if the ark were to be found today, the pot of manna, and the rod that budded wouldn't be in there, now how they were removed remains a mystery. More than likely it took place by the Philistines who captured the ark back in 1st Sam Ch 5-6, they may've just thrown the stick out, grabbed the pot that was presumably gold, and just left the "worthless" stone tablets lay where they were. But from time and again you'll hear bible teachers draw attention to the articles inside the ark, but today if it were found only the tables of stone would presumably be there.

And we see here the mention and reminder of the deliverance of Israel from out of Egypt, which again was significant because there's a sense in which the dedication of the temple is the culmination of their deliverance though they were brought out of Egypt some 500 yrs earlier. And even as the feast of Tabernacles is upon them they're reminded of all those years where out of necessity they dwelt in tents in the wilderness, which are at best temporary residences. And the tabernacle of God was a tent as well, but now that a temple has been built the days of wandering are officially over, the temple is a permanent structure, and so there's that sense of stability and security in the land that comes along with this.

And that's what makes the timing of the dedication so profound for them, right in the midst of their dwelling in tents for the week, they're seeing the fulfillment of God's promise to bring them rest and give them a permanent place to dwell in the Land as ratified in the completion of temple. The point being that God doesn't plan on going anywhere from here, no more need for the tent, we're home.

Vs10-13

And so as the final piece is placed into the temple, the presence of God fills the temple, the ratification of the dedication of the temple by God. And of course this reminds of what happened when the tabernacle was finished and God visited the tabernacle in such a powerfully profound way. And we read "*Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*" Ex 40:34-35 The presence of God was just so powerful there in the temple that the priest couldn't keep ministering in what we might consider to be the standard way. The Shekinah glory of God was just overwhelming, and the sense of God's presence as enshrouded by this cloud is not at all an uncommon happening in the scriptures. We see it in both the Old and New testaments, there in the wilderness with the children of Israel, at the tabernacle, Ezekiel saw this cloud in a vision, it was there at the transfiguration, receiving Jesus at the ascension, and it's always an awe inspiring, breath taking, heavy encounter.

And it's not so much because of the presence of the *love* of God as it is the presence of the *holiness* of God. It's the profound presence of the holiness of God that stops men in their tracks and causes them to become unable to continue in their way before the Lord. And we see it here, we've seen it with Moses, it happened with Daniel, with Isaiah, with Peter, and John, and it's not because God somehow imposes himself upon people that causes them to be stricken as it were before Him.

But it's just the overwhelming sense of contrast between our sinfulness and His holiness that just causes man to become undone in His presence. And every now and then we get just a small taste, and a glimpse of what that's like when the presence of God moves over us in such a way as to make us so incredibly aware of our sinfulness and His holiness that all we can do is weep before Him in sorrow and repentance. And again it's not because God wants to make you feel bad, it's simply the fact that His presence carries about His holiness, and when that clashes with our sinfulness we can't just go on like everything is ok, it's not ok, and when God moves upon us in that way it's always such a sweet time because it brings with it a sensitivity to the sin in our lives and with that it prompts an attitude of repentance. And so this is the type of thing that's happening there in the temple, God is filling it with His presence and His glory is becoming overwhelming to the priesthood, and it's just an awesome time of celebration and consecration.

Vs14-21

2 Things in this portion that I would draw your attention to as Solomon is praising God for His faithfulness to them in the past and preparing to implore Him to be faithful in the future and that is there (1st of all) in vs18 where the Lord responded to the position of David's heart. It's always referred to as Solomon's temple, but in reality it was in *David's* heart. And you might underline that portion there where it says, "You did well that it was in your heart." Solomon may've built it, but as far as God is concerned David got the credit for it, why? Because it was in *his* heart to do it, and God is always looking to the heart. God didn't want His temple to be built by a man of war, and that's who David was, and if David would've built it, it would've been identified with violence, bloodshed, forced submission, God didn't want that.

He wanted His house to be identified with peace and free will, but yet God commended David for the position of his heart. God is always searching the motive of our heart, you remember when Jesus was watching people give to the temple and all these real wealthy people were giving all these large gifts. And then this little old lady stepped up and dropped in a couple of mites, 2/10's of a penny or something like that. And yet Jesus said that she gave more than all, and I'm of the notion that people who are poor generally speaking give way more to God than people who are rich as far as He's concerned. Because they give out of their very substance, of their livelihood, but people who are rich can throw in a big fat check and it really doesn't impact them at all. And it's not to say that when given from the right heart God doesn't honor the rich as much as the poor, it's just to say that when the poor gives, it costs them something. And God recognizes that, because God isn't looking to the dollar amount as much as He's looking to the heart behind the giving. Because He doesn't need our money, and so God says to you, and He says to me that we do well, when it's in our heart to somehow honor Him even if we can't physically follow through. Now if we can then we should, but even if we can't but it's truly in our hearts to do so if we could, God honors that just the same.

And then in vs 20, "The Lord fulfilled His word which He spoke." God will always fulfill the word which He speaks.

Num 23:19 *“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”* Ezek 12:25 *“For I am the LORD. I speak, and the word which I speak will come to pass;”* and Of course Jesus said, *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”* Matt 24:35 and So here we see Solomon acknowledging the faithfulness of God to His word, which is good news for you and me. Because by His word Jesus promised eternal life to those who believe in Him, I’m so glad God is faithful to His word, perhaps you’re struggling in your walk tonight, tuck this one away, *“He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;”* Phil 1:6 The Lord fulfills the word which He speaks.

Vs22-23

So now we come to this prayer of consecration whereby Solomon dedicates the temple. And in 2nd Chronicles we read where Solomon had made a bronze platform about 4 ½’ tall and 7 ½’ sq to stand on before the people. And what an awesome introduction to this prayer here in vs 23 (which I have underlined in my bible) as he just opens his heart before God in praise and thanksgiving to God for His faithfulness and His mercies, and His uniqueness in extending Himself to man in such a way as to offer man a relationship with Him. And he says, *“God there’s no one like You, faithful to your word, merciful towards the man who walks before you with all their hearts.”* How important it is to walk before God with all our hearts, that we leave no portion “off limits” to God. God wants our whole heart, not just a portion of it, but all of it, and He’s worthy of it, and Solomon says here.

Vs24-30

Vs 27 shows us that Solomon wasn’t in anyway delusional when he said that God would dwell in the house he built forever. He says the heavens of the heavens can’t even contain You, how much less this temple which I have built! In other words I know that You’ve honored us with your presence in this place, but we know that You’re presence is Omnipresent, and that You’re in no way bound by this little earthly structure, Heaven is Your throne, the earth is Your footstool, when I consider the heavens and the works of Your hands, the moon and the stars which You have ordained, what is man that you are mindful of Him? (Ps 139:7-12) That’s the kinda thought Solomon is flowing with here, he knows he hasn’t built a container for God to be housed in.

Vs 30 makes it clear that he knows that God dwells in Heaven, but what I want you to see in vs 30 is the premise that’s going to guide his entire prayer from this point out. (And we’ll highlight it but we won’t read it all). But the whole hope of His prayer is to invoke the forgiveness of God in time of need. He says, people are going to be making all sorts of prayers and petitions towards this place, and my prayer, is that when You hear, You’ll forgive. Solomon in his wisdom recognized the need we have of God’s forgiveness, oh that we all would recognize our need for God’s forgiveness.

But basically he makes 7 specific requests: #1 In Vs 31-32 Concerning being wronged. #2 In Vs 33-34 Concerning warfare. #3 In vs 35-36 Concerning wastelands, #4 In Vs 37-40 Concerning plagues, #5 In Vs 41-43 Concerning pagans becoming proselytes, #6 In Vs 44-45 Concerning God's protection in battle and #7 In Vs 46-53 Concerning God's punishment.

Look at vs 31-32

So he begins by crying out to God for the cause of the just, that God would vindicate the one who is wronged and deal accordingly with the wicked. 2ndly vs 33-34 (read)

He says, "Look when the enemy defeats us because we're in sin, when we recognize that, and confess our sin, then forgive. Next he begins to speak of God's chastening hand through drought, and then all sorts of various plagues and national calamities due to sin in the lives of the people of the nation. You know the bible says, "*Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.*" Prov 14:34 And so Solomon says when our sin brings reproach upon us on a national scale, then (notice vs 38).

Vs38-40

Underline the end of vs 39, "You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men." and One thing to notice as you might survey these things on your own is that the end desire of all of these things is repentance and restoration. When we've been wronged, God defend us, when the enemy comes in like a flood because of sin in our lives and we're defeated, God may that stir us to see the depravity of our situation that we might repent. When we're experiencing dry times, our hearts become a barren wasteland, and we're visited with various plagues and afflictions of the heart, Lord help us to see it, repent of it and be restored from it. Of course the 6th thing has to do with divine protection when we're ordained to be in the battle, that God would maintain our cause and grant us victory. But then #7 is when because of sin in our lives we're not only defeated by the enemy by we're plundered and taken captive by the enemy due to some perversity or persuasion towards idolatry in our hearts. And the prayer is that we would come to our senses, confess our wrongs, and that God would be merciful, and forgive and set us free once again. But I want you to see here in vs 41-43 that God's plan has always been to bring salvation to the world, not just Israel, notice.

Vs41-43

"God may pagans become proselytes" this is Solomon's missionary prayer. "God when people hear of the great works You're doing in this place, may it stir *them* to repentance, and may people from all over the world come to know You as the true and living God." Now somewhere down the line Israel missed their calling, and they began to believe that they were so special that God chose them, and ordained them to salvation, but to bad so sad for the rest of the world. But even a not so careful study of the scripture shows that God's heart has always been for all of mankind, and that God so loved *the world*. And as Solomon is praying he acknowledges the heart of God, and prays that the work God is doing there might have global impact in bringing many into a saving relationship with Him. And of course that's our prayer as well, that the work God does here might have global impact.

Now we're not far from done but I want you to see something else here real quick, in vs 44 Solomon speaks of protection from the enemy, in vs 46 he begins to speak of punishment by the enemy due to that hedge of protection being lifted because of some sin in their lives, now look at vs 46.

Vs46-53

"God we're a faulty and a frail people, but we're asking for your mercy in advance." But what I want you to see here is this pattern that's established here in vs 46 we see, "There is no one who does not sin." Paul said it like this, "...*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*" Rom 3:23

There are none that are righteous, no not one, we have all gone astray, Solomon says, there is no one who does not sin. So we see sin (#1) #2 in vs 47 we see repentance, and confession, "When they come to their senses" Solomon says, and say, "We have sinned and done wrong, we have committed wickedness," then comes forgiveness, vs 50. (Read) So we see sin, confession and forgiveness, and it's as if Solomon had some sort of prophetic insight in this because it happened exactly this way, and Daniel followed this pattern exactly, no doubt reflecting on this prayer of Solomon's. And he would face Jerusalem and pray 3x's a day as they were there in Babylonian captivity due to sin in the life of the nation. And we read there in Ch 9 "*I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, 'O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled,'*" Dan 9:3-5 Of course John said it like this, "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" 1 John 1:9 and So the pattern, sin, confession, forgiveness.

Vs54

So at some point he went from his feet to his knees, and we don't have God's response here, but in 2nd Chronicles we see what God said to this, and it's that familiar portion of scripture that you've heard before. But when Solomon finished his prayer and God appeared to him He said, "*I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*" 2 Chron 7:12-14 But we read here in vs 55

Vs55-61

This is that which we've been resting on the last few Sunday mornings, love *for* God equals loyalty *to* God.

Vs62-66

So he commenced the dedication ceremony a week before the feast of tabernacles and then let in role right on through, and it was just a huge joyous occasion for the nation, and in vs 66 we see the right response to time spent with God. When we've spent time with the Lord, just serving and ministering to the Lord, we should go our way, joyful, and glad of heart, because is so faithful *to* us, and has done so much *for* us.