Solomon Seeks God’s Blessing
1 Kings 8:22-30, 52-53
SS Lesson for 01/19/2020

Devotional Scripture: 1 Timothy 2:1-8

OUTLINE

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Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

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Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

First Kings 8:1-21 narrates the initial stages of the dedication ceremony Solomon orchestrated for the temple he had built in Jerusalem for the God of Israel. The priests carried the Ark of the Covenant to the temple and placed it within the temple’s innermost chamber, the most holy place. The Lord’s glory then filled the temple, signaling God's approval of Solomon and the temple. Solomon related to the congregation of Israel the story of the Lord’s covenant faithfulness to David. The evidence for this was Solomon’s coming to the throne in the place of his father and in the completion of the temple.

Key Verse: 1 Kings 8:30

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

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

8:22-24. Solomon stood and then kneeled (v. 54) on a special bronze platform that had been built in the temple courtyard for the dedication service (2 Chron. 6:13). Solomon began his prayer with worship and praise to God for His uniqueness and His faithfulness in keeping His promises. **Love** translates *ḥesed*, meaning loyal love (cf. 1 Kings 10:9). The king then proceeded to petition God and to intercede for His people. Nine requests may be noted in this prayer:

8:25-30. Solomon called on God to continue to be faithful to His **promises to David** (vv. 25-26; cf. 2:4) and to continue to **hear the prayers of His people** (8:28-30; **hear** occurs five times in these three verses). Of course no temple or even the heavens could contain the omnipresent God (v. 27). **Heaven** itself is His **dwelling place** (cf. vv. 39, 49; Ps. 11:4; Hab. 2:20). Yet in His majesty He is interested in His people’s prayers.

8:31-32. Solomon asked God to **judge** righteously in interpersonal disputes among the Israelites.

8:33-34. The king asked the Lord to **forgive** His people when they confessed their sins that caused defeat in combat

8:35-36. Solomon also asked God to **forgive** His people if they confessed sins that resulted in **rain** being withheld (cf. Lev. 26:18-19; Deut. 11:16-17; 28:23-24).

8:37-40. **Famine... plague... blight... mildew, locusts... grasshoppers, enemies, disaster, and disease** were all instruments God used to chasten His sinning people. Again the king asked God to **forgive** those who repented of sin that led to these calamities. Solomon affirmed God’s knowledge of people’s motives (hearts).

8:41-43. Solomon interceded on behalf of non-Israelites who would trust Yahweh and pray to Him. By hearing them, God’s fame would spread worldwide.

8:44-45. Solomon asked God to **uphold His people** when they prayed to Him in times of physical distress in combat.

8:46-51. The king seemed to have prophetic insight into the fate of God’s people. They did indeed go into captivity because of their sins against God; they called on Him for forgiveness, and they experienced restoration to their land. Centuries later Daniel prayed **toward the land** when he was in Babylon (Dan. 6:10).

8:52-53. Solomon summarized his petitions by calling on God to hear His people **whenever they cry out** in prayer. These calamities were all listed in Deuteronomy as curses on Israel for her breaking the covenant (Deut. 28:22, 25, 38, 42, 59; 31:17, 29; 32:24). In this whole prayer (1 Kings 8:23-53) Solomon called on God, who had been faithful to His promises in the past, to continue to be faithful and to show mercy to His people (His chosen **inheritance**, vv. 36, 51, 53 in the future. Confession and forsaking of sin would result in God’s hearing His people’s prayers (“hear” occurs 13 times in this prayer, and in the first eight of the nine petitions) and God’s forgiving them (“forgive” occurs 6 times).
8:54-55. Solomon... had been kneeling in prayer with his hands spread out toward heaven in a posture of supplication. Then he arose to pronounce a benediction on the people.

8:56-61. God had given rest (peace) to His people and had kept all the good promises He had given through... Moses. Solomon reminded the people of this. Then he expressed his desire for three things: That the LORD would be with Solomon’s generation as He had been with his forefathers, that God would give His people the will to walk in all His ways, and that the requests Solomon had made in his prayer would remain close to the heart of God day by day. Solomon ultimately desired that all the peoples of the earth (cf. v. 43) might know that Yahweh is the only true God (cf. 18:39). In order for all this to take place Solomon reminded the people that they must be fully committed to the LORD and obedient to His Word. Solomon himself eventually failed to do this.

As the king finished speaking, “fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple” (2 Chron. 7:1) as it had earlier filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-35; Lev. 9:23-24).

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Seeking God’s Faithfulness (1 Kings 8:22-26)

22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven;
23 and 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.
24 You 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.
25 Therefore, 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.

Past faithfulness (22-24)

Past faithfulness that teach us hope (Rom 15:4)

4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Past faithfulness that help us run the race with perseverance (Heb 12:1)

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Past faithfulness that should be followed (Acts 3:22-24)

22 For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. 23 Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.' 24 "Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days.

Past faithfulness that teach us to follow the way of hope (Acts 24:14-15)

14 However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, 15 and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.
Past faithfulness that reveals the mystery of Christ (Eph 3:4-6)

4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. 6 This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Past faithfulness that teach us patience (James 5:10)

10 Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Future faithfulness (25-26)

Faithfulness that is renewed every morning (Lam 3:22-23)

22 Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Faithfulness through God’s love for us (Ps 89:1)

1 I will sing of the Lord's great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.

Faithfulness for eternity (Ps 146:6)

6 the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them — the Lord, who remains faithful forever.

Faithfulness because He promised and God cannot lie (Titus 1:2)

2 a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,

Faithfulness because God is faithful (Heb 10:23)

23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Seeking God’s Answer to Prayers (1 Kings 8:27-30, 52-53)

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.

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."

Answers with power (27)

Answered prayer through asking in the Name of Jesus (John 16:22-24)

22 So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. 23 In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.
Answered prayer for wisdom (James 1:5)
5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

Answered prayer through being righteous (James 5:16-18)
16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Answered prayer through obedience (1 John 3:21-22)
21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

Answered prayer through asking according to God's will (1 John 5:13-15)
13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

Answers with attentiveness (28-29)

God is attentive to the prayers of the righteous (Ps 34:15-17)
15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry; 16 the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. 17 The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.

God is attentive to those who pray to Him in truth (Ps 145:18)
18 The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

God is attentive to the prayers of the godly (John 9:31)
31 We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will.

God is attentive to the obedient (1 John 3:21-22)
21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

God is attentive to our prayers for the sake of His covenant (Ps 106:43-45)
43 Many times he delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion and they wasted away in their sin. 44 But he took note of their distress when he heard their cry; 45 for their sake he remembered his covenant and out of his great love he relented.

Answers because of hearing prayers (30)

Heard by God because He always hears the prayers of His saints (Ps 65:2)
2 O you who hear prayer, to you all men will come.

Heard by God because He knows all before the prayer is spoken (Isa 65:24)
24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

Heard by God because of patient hope of all saints (Mic 7:7)
7 But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.
Heard by God because He promised it (Matt 7:7-8)

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Answers because of being chosen (52-53)

Chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:15-16)

15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

Chosen by grace (Rom 11:5)

5 So too, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace.

Chosen Jesus (Eph 1:11)

11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

Chosen to be clothed with humility, gentleness and patience (Col 3:12-14)

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God (1 Peter 1:2)

2 who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Chosen to be a people belonging to God (1 Peter 2:9-10)

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable

There is little doubt that the building of the temple is viewed as one of Solomon’s greatest contributions. More space is devoted to the building of the temple than any other aspect of his life. Solomon’s prayer of dedication is certainly one of the high points of his spiritual life. His prayer does demonstrate Solomon’s grasp of the law and of the role of the temple. Whether he received this primarily from his father, or came from his own meditation on the law, is debatable. I am inclined to think that Solomon learned most of his spiritual insights from his father. Allow me to make several observations concerning Solomon’s prayer of dedication.

First, this dedication of the temple is a predominantly Solomon’s prayer that is addressed to God, who has taken up residence in the temple (8:10-11, 23ff.). This is not a speech that Solomon makes to the crowd that is gathered, but a petition to the God whose temple it is.

Second, there is a very close link between this dedicatory prayer and the Mosaic Covenant. Solomon anticipates certain events in the future, which should prompt the people of God to turn toward the temple and pray. These include:

Defeat by an enemy (8:33-34; see Deuteronomy 28:25ff.)
Drought and famine (8:35-40; see Deuteronomy 28:23-24)
Captivity in a foreign land (8:46-51; see Deuteronomy 28:36-37, 63-68)
All of these things are anticipated in Deuteronomy. Solomon’s prayer is, therefore, shaped and guided by the Mosaic Covenant.

Third, this dedication is not only a prayer, it is about prayer. The word “pray” or “prayer” occurs 17 times in 1 Kings 8. The temple was intended to encourage and facilitate the prayers of God’s people. Those who could pray included both Jews and Gentiles:

41 “Foreigners, who do not belong to your people Israel, will come from a distant land because of your reputation. 42 When they hear about your great reputation and your ability to accomplish mighty deeds, they will come and direct their prayers toward this temple. 43 Then listen from your heavenly dwelling place and answer all the prayers of the foreigners. Then all the nations of the earth will acknowledge your reputation, obey you like your people Israel do, and recognize that this temple I built belongs to you” (1 Kings 8:41-43).

This certainly helps us to understand why our Lord was so upset when some of the Jews occupied the temple court and turned it into a business plaza, rather than a place of prayer:

Then he began to teach them and said, “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have turned it into a den of robbers!” (Mark 11:17)

Fourth, there is a strong emphasis on the fulfillment of God’s covenant promises in this prayer. Among other things, Solomon is praising God for this temple as the fulfillment of His promises. On the one hand there is thanksgiving and praise for the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abram and to Moses:

“The Lord is worthy of praise because he has made Israel his people secure just as he promised. Not one of all the faithful promises he made through his servant Moses is left unfulfilled” (1 Kings 8:56, emphasis mine).

20 The Lord has kept the promise he made. I have taken my father David’s place and have occupied the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised. I have built this temple for the honor of the Lord God of Israel 21 and set up in it a place for the ark containing the covenant the Lord made with our ancestors when he brought them out of the land of Egypt” (1 Kings 8:20-21, emphasis mine).

We see fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant in the number of Israelites, in Israel’s geographical boundaries under Solomon, and in the blessings that have come to the Gentiles:

1 Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go out from your country, your relatives, and your father’s household to the land that I will show you.
2 Then I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, in order that you might be a prime example of divine blessing.
3 I will bless those who bless you, but the one who treats you lightly I must curse, and all the families of the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using your name” (Genesis 12:1-3, emphasis mine; compare 1 Kings 8:41-43, cited above).

18 That day the Lord made a covenant with Abram: “To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River— 19 the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites” (Genesis 15:18-21; see also Deuteronomy 11:24; Joshua 1:4).

Solomon ruled all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These kingdoms paid tribute as Solomon’s subjects throughout his lifetime (1 Kings 4:21).

More than anything, Solomon views the completion of the temple in terms of the covenant God made with his father David:

15 He said, “The Lord God of Israel is worthy of praise because he has fulfilled what he promised my father David. 16 He told David, ‘Since the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city from all the tribes of Israel to build a temple in which to live. But I have chosen David to lead my people Israel.’ 17 Now my father David had a strong desire to build a temple to honor the Lord God of Israel. 18 The Lord told my father David, ‘It is right for you to have a strong desire to build a temple to honor me. 19 But you will not build the temple; your very own son will build the temple for my honor.’ 20 The Lord has kept the promise he made. I have taken my father David’s place and have occupied the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised. I have
built this temple for the honor of the Lord God of Israel 21 and set up in it a place for the ark containing the covenant the Lord made with our ancestors when he brought them out of the land of Egypt” (1 Kings 8:15-21).

Fifth, there is a strong sense of expectation in this prayer of dedication that God will completely fulfill His covenant with David:

24 You have kept your word to your servant, my father David; this very day you have fulfilled what you promised. 25 Now, O Lord, God of Israel, keep the promise you made to your servant, my father David, when you said, ‘You will never fail to have a successor ruling before me on the throne of Israel, provided that your descendants watch their step and serve me as you have done.’ 26 Now, O God of Israel, may the promise you made to your servant, my father David, be realized” (1 Kings 8:24-26, emphasis mine).

When these words of Solomon are compared with Psalm 72, one gets the distinct feeling that Solomon hopes his reign might be the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. When you stop to think about it, Solomon and others had some basis for thinking along these lines. After all, Solomon’s kingdom could appear to be the fulfillment of the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants. The descendants of Abraham are as numerous as the sand of the sea (1 Kings 4:20). Israel is living in the Promised Land, they dominate the surrounding nations, and they are living in great prosperity. If all these promises were fulfilled, then why not the promise God made to David, and why not through his son, Solomon?

Sixth, Solomon’s words reveal that he rightly understands God’s presence cannot, and will not, be limited to a temple:

12 Then Solomon said, “The Lord has said that he lives in thick darkness. 13 O Lord, truly I have built a lofty temple for you, a place where you can live permanently.” … 27 “God does not really live on the earth! Look, if the sky and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this temple I have built!” (1 Kings 8:12-13, 27).

This is a point Stephen will take up many years later when he is accused of speaking against the temple (Acts 7:45-50).

(Adapted from URL: https://bible.org/seriespage/20-reign-solomon-1-kings-1-11)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Solomon's temple-dedication prayer highlights the Lord's faithfulness to His covenant with David. The establishment of Solomon as king and the completion of the temple bore witness to God's faithfulness to David and to Israel. That past faithfulness formed the basis for Solomon's expectation of and his petition for the Lord's continued covenant loyalty. He prayed that the Lord would hear His people when they prayed toward the house Solomon had built for the Lord's name (1 Kings 8:29). God agreed to use the temple as a gateway to Him. Jesus, the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant promises to David, spoke of himself as a temple (John 2:19, 21). Believers have access to God through Christ (Ephesians 2:18), and in His name we are able to approach God boldly and to pray in confidence that God will hear (John 14:13, 14; 15:16; Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 4:16).

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

Solomon's Plea - Solomon dedicated the temple standing outside the building. Although he was king, only the priest was allowed inside the Holy and Most Holy Places. Solomon spread out his arms toward the heavens demonstrating openness and surrender to the Lord. He spoke confidently to God about the nation, believing the Father hears and answers prayer. Solomon quoted many of the Old Testament verses in his prayer of dedication. When he held Israel's God up as one being supreme and unique to all other gods in the surrounding nations, there was no comparison.

A Covenant-Keeping God - Solomon also boldly stated that God makes and keeps His promises. What God had promised to Solomon's father, David, happened exactly as God said it would. Solomon formally requested God to fulfill the remaining part of the prayer—that the house of David would always rule in Israel.
God Is Faithful - Solomon further reminded the people of God's grace and continued blessings hinged on their relationship to Him. If they rebelled and turned to false gods, they would suffer the consequences. However, in His mercy God would not destroy them all, therefore keeping His word. Solomon also admitted it was impossible for the earthy temple to contain the immense magnitude of God. The Lord lives everywhere, yet He had a special presence in the temple. But they should never, ever worship the building, only the God over the temple.

God's Mercy - Solomon spoke about forgiveness, pardon, and grace. When the people repented, Solomon asked the Lord to hear the heartfelt sorrow of His people and extend His mercy. Solomon knew well the shortcomings of human nature.

Pray On - One can almost hear the anguish and desperation of Solomon exhorting the congregation. God still longs to hear and answer these kinds of heartfelt prayers concerning His lost children. Do we still believe God hears and answers prayer?