

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS**

**LESSON 4**

**THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS**

**CHAPTER 8**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Temple was completed. The great day had finally arrived for Solomon to move the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD and all the other sacred furniture to a more permanent house. Solomon chose the day and gathered all the children of Israel for this momentous event. He addressed the people and led them in a memorable prayer of praise and thanksgiving to the LORD their God.

The main thrust of his prayer was that God might hear his people when they directed their prayers towards the Temple and forgive those who have sinned. This request was based on the ground of God's covenantal promise. God honoured him and inspired him to pray accordingly. In his prayer, Solomon expressed God's love for His people and His faithfulness to His word. Solomon spoke of God's holiness and justice, and power. God is not only the God of Israel but He is the God of the universe.

This holy and momentous event marked a major turning point in the

history of God's people. From then onwards they were a more settled people unlike in the past when they were more nomadic, and had to conquer and subdue the inhabitants of the land. Israel reached the zenith of her power during David's reign. There was peace, progress and political stability. The Temple remained the cultural and religious centre of Israel's history until Jerusalem and the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. Today, the Mosque of Omar stands on the very site of the Temple ground. However, the orthodox Jews are waiting for the day when they will rebuild the Temple and resume their ritualistic worship to God.

Chapter 8 can be divided into three sections: (1) the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD together with all the other furniture, vessels and utensils, and Solomon's message to the people on this occasion; (2) the dedicatory prayer by Solomon; and (3) the blessing of the congregation followed by the offering of sacrifices and feasting.

**OUTLINE**

1. Moving of the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD (vv.1-9);
2. The Shekinah Glory (vv.10-21);
3. Solomon's Dedicatory Prayer (vv.22-53);
4. Solomon Blesses the People (vv.54- 61);
5. Solomon Celebrates with a Feast (vv.62- 66)

## COMMENTARY

### Moving of the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD– 8:1-9

SOLOMON gathered all the elders, the heads of the tribes and the princes at Jerusalem to witness the re-housing of the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD from its present abode which is in the tent in the city of David, to the newly completed Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple was about a few hundred metres away from the city of David. It was therefore outside the walls of the city of David. It was the time of the Feast of the Tabernacles in the month of Ethanim (later renamed “Tishri”), which is the seventh month (September-October). This was almost eleven months after the Temple was completed in the eighth month of the previous year (6:38). In other words the Temple stood empty and unused for that period. No reason is given why Solomon waited that long. But one can surmise that Solomon would want to dedicate the Temple during the one-week Feast of the Tabernacles. During this time many Jews from all the other tribes would converge in the city of David where the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD was located.

ALL the elders of Israel stood as the guard of honour while the priests performed their divine appointed responsibility of transporting the Ark to its new dwelling place (Numbers 4:5, 15). We know what happened the last time when David did not get the priests to carry the Ark properly. Solomon learned his lesson well. The priests together with the help of the Levites carried the Ark and all the sacred

vessels from the tabernacle to the Temple. Solomon led the entourage with all the elders and chiefs and princes followed by the priests and Levites carrying the Ark. As they moved slowly, Solomon offered sacrifices of sheep and oxen along the way. In other words they moved a short distance and stopped, and then offered the sacrifices, and moved on until they reached the Temple (v.5).

On reaching the Temple, the priests brought the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD into “His place” that was the Most Holy Place (the Holy of Holies) even under the wings of the cherubims (8:6). They then drew out the staves, thus indicating that the Ark was now in its permanent dwelling place. This was never allowed while Israel wandered in the wilderness as they dwelt in a temporary home like the Tabernacle, which had to be moved constantly.

The staves were placed in the Most Holy Place across the veil, which separated it from the Holy Place. It is stated that the ends of the staves could be seen but the Ark was not visible from the outside. In the Ark were the two tablets of stone on which was inscribed the Ten Commandments. Significantly, the pot of manna and Aaron’s rod that budded were missing. Some explained that they might have been lost when the Philistines captured the Ark. But a better explanation is that there was no need for them to remind the children of Israel regarding the divine appointment of the priestly office of the Aaronic line, and God’s provision of the manna

during their journeying in the wilderness. These were past matters, which were not relevant to the Israel of Solomon's time. The priestly office had been settled and not challenged. The manna had ceased the moment they entered the Promised Land in Joshua's time. But the moral law of God, which is the Ten Commandments, is forever applicable regardless of Israel's status or standing or national make-up. Israel must always live in accordance to the Word of God and do His will.

### **The Shekinah Glory – 8:10-21**

What was lacking now that the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD was put in its proper place was the presence of the LORD—"the Shekinah" (meaning: residence). This word is not in Scripture but used by later Jews and by Christians to express the visible divine Presence, especially when resting between the cherubims over the Mercy Seat. When the tabernacle was completed in the wilderness, a cloud covered the tabernacle so much so that Moses was not able to enter the tent. The cloud remained over the tabernacle and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. This happened again in the Temple. The moment the priests came out of the Most Holy Place "the cloud filled the house of the LORD." The priests could not stand to minister "because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD" (8:11). The visible cloud signified the presence of God and His glory which is like "a consuming fire." It was also a sign of God's acceptance of the Temple which Solomon had

built. In this way God honoured Solomon. The Temple would be useless without the presence of the LORD.

Then Solomon told the people that the LORD had said that He would dwell in the thick darkness (v.12). While the cloud filled the house of the LORD, there was thick darkness. This visible cloud and thick darkness symbolizing the presence of God signifies that there are certain things that we can know about God which are revealed to us, and that there are certain things that we cannot know about God which are concealed. Indeed, the LORD declared to the children of Israel through Moses (Deuteronomy 29:29): *The **secret things** belong unto the **LORD** our God: but those **things which are revealed** belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.* This suggests that we cannot know God exhaustively because how can the finite totally comprehend the Infinite. But we can know Him adequately to the extent of what He had revealed to us in His God-breathed, infallible, inerrant and forever preserved Word of Life.

Solomon then addressed the congregation who stood before the Temple. He blessed the people before he spoke. The theme of his address was God's goodness and faithfulness. He began his speech by blessing and praising the LORD. He related very briefly a historical summary of the people as they were led by the LORD since their exodus from Egypt. He testified that the LORD chose David

his father to rule over Israel. While it was in the heart of David to build the Temple, God did not allow him to build it, but that the Temple would be built by his son (Solomon). Solomon pointed out that God had kept His word to David and had raised him to succeed his father David, and to build the Temple. Solomon knew that where he was and what he did was in God's will, which was very strongly evidenced by the Shekinah glory.

### **Solomon's Dedicatory Prayer – 8:22-53**

Apparently Solomon prayed in the open courtyard of the Temple before the congregation. He was up on a raised bronze platform or pulpit (2 Chronicles 6:13). He spread out his hands and began his prayer by praising God as should any prayer. He praised God for who He is—"no God like Him in heaven above or on earth beneath" (8:23). He praised God for being true and faithful to His covenant and being merciful to his servants who walked before Him with all their hearts. He had kept all His promises to David his father. Having appropriately praised God, Solomon made a series of petitions.

Firstly, he asked the LORD God to continue to keep His promise with regard to the Covenant that He had made with him. He asked that the Davidic line be continued and that his descendants would obey and walk in the way of the LORD (vv.25-26).

Secondly, he acknowledged the immensity and transcendence of the LORD God for His dwelling place is in "the heaven and heaven of heavens."

But he prayed that the LORD would condescend to open His eyes and hear His people when they directed their prayers towards the Temple. The ground of Solomon's prayer in this regard was God's promise (8:27-30).

Thirdly, he asked God to condemn and punish the man who sinned against his neighbour by swearing falsely and to justify the righteous (vv.31-32).

Fourthly, he prayed that should the people of Israel sin against Him and be defeated by their enemies and taken captive, God will hear them and forgive them their sin, and bring them back to the land which He had given to their forefathers (vv.33-34) when they will to confess their sins and turn again to the LORD, and cry to Him,.

Fifthly, when drought occurred and there was no rain because the people had sinned against the LORD, and if the people turned to God, confessed their sin, when the LORD had afflicted them, he asked God to forgive their sin and to teach them the good way that they should walk and give them rain (8:35-36).

Sixthly, he mentioned that if there were other kinds of calamities like famine, pestilence, locusts, their plants eaten by locusts and caterpillars, and plagues and illness were to strike the people and the land, and when the people prayed towards the Temple, he asked God to hear their supplication whether it was made by an individual or corporately to forgive them and to deal with each of them according to His ways so that they might fear Him all the days of their life. Solomon

confessed that God knows the hearts of all men (vv.37-40).

Seventhly, Solomon asked the LORD to hear the prayers of strangers who came to Israel because they had heard about Him. Solomon remarked that when God hears these strangers, the people of the earth might know the LORD and fear Him as Israel feared Him (vv.41-43). So Solomon recognized that the LORD is not only the God of Israel but also the God of all the other nations.

Eighthly, Solomon asked God to give Israel victory in the battle against her enemies. And if the Israelites had sinned against Him, and were taken away captives into the land of the enemies, yet when they confess their sins, repent, pray and return to God with all their heart, then hear their prayers and lead them back to their land (vv.44-49) This petition is the same as the fourth petition (vv.33-34).

Solomon made eight specific requests to God on behalf of the people. The basis of Solomon's prayer and petition is the fact that Israel was God's people whom He had delivered out of Egypt, from "the midst of the furnace of iron" (vv.51-52)! Moreover, God had separated them from among all the people of the earth as He had declared to Moses when He brought them out of Egypt. Thus Solomon ended his prayer on behalf of the children of Israel.

**Solomon Blesses  
the People– 8:54- 61**

After his dedicatory prayer, Solomon turned to the people to bless

them. Once again before blessing the people, He blessed the LORD confessing that He had given peace to the people and land according to all that He had promised. He had not failed in any of the promises He had made to Moses. Moses continued that the LORD had been with them, as He was with their forefathers, and "let Him not leave us, nor forsake us" (v.57). This last statement is significant. God will always be faithful to His promise not to leave nor forsake His people. But the sins of the people will separate them from God. Hence, Solomon charged the people to incline their hearts unto the LORD, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments, and His statutes, and His judgments.

Indeed, Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 12:13 that the primary and paramount duty of man is to *fear God, and keep His commandments!* In other words all our activities must be motivated for God's sake. Solomon further remarked that when the people of God walked in His ways, then all the other people would be drawn to the LORD to know Him that He is God and none else. How important it is for God's people to live in accordance to the Word of God and bear a good testimony. It is by this way that others are attracted to God. A needful lesson for many Christians today to learn and live by! Solomon repeated his charge again thus emphasizing its importance.

**Solomon Celebrates  
with a Feast– 8:62- 66**

The king and all the people offered peace offerings to the LORD. It was a

great feast—the Feast of the Tabernacles. The king hallowed the middle of the court, which was before the Temple by offering burnt offerings, meat offerings and peace offerings. The divine inspired writer even commented that the brazen altar was too small to cope with all the offerings. The Feast of the Tabernacles was to last seven days, and in this celebration it was extended for another seven days. On the fifteenth day Solomon dismissed the people. They blessed the king and each returned to his tent (those who came from other states). They were joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for his servant David and for His people Israel.

**PRACTICAL VALUE**

What a great chapter! The Christian must feel very happy after reading and meditating on it. The things that are revealed concerning God are most encouraging and comforting. The LORD (YAHWEH) is not the God of Israel only but also the God of the whole earth! God never fails in His word. His promises are true His word is sure. There is no letting down or repentance with the LORD concerning His word. God hears our prayers.

But we learn the sobering truth that our sins separate us from God. God will punish us. But restoration is available if we confess our sins, repent and return to the LORD wholeheartedly; the LORD hears our prayers and supplications. This is the way that God has shown how

Christians too can be reconciled one with another when they sin against each other.

Solomon’s prayer teaches us how to pray and what the things we can ask God are. Always begin by praising and thanking God. Always confess our known sins for sins separate us from God. Always end with blessing God and thanking Him in expectation of His answer. AMEN.

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**MONDAY:** 1 Kings 8:1-9.

**TUESDAY:** 1 Kings 8: 10-21.

**WEDNESDAY:** 1 Kings 8:22-53

**THURSDAY:** 1 Kings 8:54-66

**FRIDAY:** 1 Kings 8:1-66

**Discussion Questions**

- 1. In what way, if any, is our church building today similar to the Temple in Solomon’s time?

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2. Do you think that we look after the physical aspects of the building properly? For example the cleanliness, the Architecture, the overall design etc.

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3. Did Solomon pray correctly when he asked the LORD for all these things at the dedication of the Temple? Solomon elevated the Temple to a place of such enormous proportion that an Israelite had to face Jerusalem from now onwards when he prays or else his prayers would not be answered!

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5. Did Solomon practise what he prayed or preached? Why is it that Christians find it so hard to practise what they preach? If so, perhaps it is better not to preach or teach since it is impossible at all for a Christian to practise what he preaches. Is this statement true?

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4. When we sin and remain in sin is our fellowship or relationship with God broken or is it both?