

A STUDY OF FIRST KINGS (LESSON P06)

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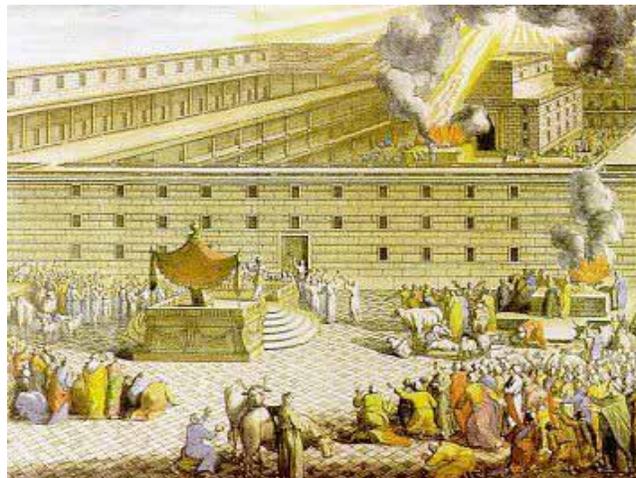
REVIEW

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CURRENT LESSON (P-06)

5. THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE [8:1-66].

8:1-6] - The public and formal inauguration of this national place of worship did not take place until eleven months after its completion. The delay could have been because of Solomon's desire to choose the most fitting opportunity when there would be a general gathering of the people in Jerusalem; and that was not until the next year (which was a "jubilee year"). He wanted to start the solemn ceremony a few days before the Feast of Tabernacles, which was most appropriate.



"Tabernacles" had been instituted in commemoration of the Israelites' dwelling in "booths" ("tabernacles") during their journeys in the wilderness; as well as for The Tabernacle Itself – the "tent of worship", which had been erected at God's Direction during that time. God had promised to meet with His people and sanctify the Tabernacle with His glory.

Just as the Tabernacle was to be superseded by the Temple, choosing the "Feast of Tabernacles" to dedicate the new House of Worship was a quite natural thing to do. We may also be assured that The LORD was directly involved in choosing this date.



At the time appointed for the inauguration, the King issued orders for all the heads and representatives of the nation to come to Jerusalem and take part in the solemn procession (1 Kings 8:1). The lead was taken by the King and elders of the people, whose march must have been slow, as priests were stationed to offer an immense number of sacrifices at various points along the road over which the procession was to travel. Next came the priests bearing the Ark and the old Mosaic Tabernacle which was brought from Gibeon. Lastly, the Levites followed, carrying the vessels and ornaments belonging to the old, for placement in the new House of the Lord.

The Ark of the Covenant was deposited in the Most Holy Place under the wings of the "new" free-standing cherubim made by Solomon, which were far larger than the former one which were attached to the solid gold "lid" ("Mercy Seat") of the Ark.

8:7-8] - They drew the staves out partially so that they might serve as a guide to the high priest to conduct him within that darkened place where, once a year, he went to officiate before the Ark; otherwise he might miss his way in the dark, the Ark being wholly overshadowed by the wings of the cherubim.

8:9-11] - That "cloud" was the visible symbol of the Divine Presence, and its being in the Sanctuary was a testimony that God had accepted the Temple just as He had the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34). It was dazzling bright while at the same time thick darkness!

Moses had also been extremely impressed with this phenomenon which such astonishment and terror (Leviticus 16:2-13) (Deuteronomy 4:24) (Exodus 40:35) that they could not remain. Thus the Temple became the place where the Divine Glory was revealed, and The LORD was said to have established His royal residence.

8:12] - Solomon spoke for the reassurance of the priests and people, to remind them that the cloud, instead of being a sign ominous of evil, was a token of approval.

The thought of what The Lord "had said" is not found in one specific location, but in a series of actions (Exodus 13:21) (24:16) (Numbers 9:15).

8:13] - Solomon welcomed God's approach by the cloud, and invited Him to inhabit the fixed and permanent dwelling-place, which, at His command, had been prepared for His reception.

8:14-21] - Solomon turned his face from the Temple where he had been watching the movement of the mystic cloud, and while the people were standing, partly as the attitude of devotion, partly out of respect to royalty, the King gave a fervent expression of praise to God for the fulfillment of His promise (2 Samuel 7:6-16).

6. SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION (8:22-61)

8:22-53] - This position was in the "Court of the People", on a scaffold erected for the occasion (2 Chronicles 6:13), in front of the Altar of burnt offering, and surrounded by a mighty concourse of people. Kneeling (1 Kings 8:54) (cf 2 Chronicles 6:24) with uplifted hands, he performed the solemn act of consecration - a remarkable action in that it was done, not by the High Priest or any member of the Aaronic family, but by the King in person, who might minister around - but never inside - the Most Holy Place.

His prayer asked seven distinct petitions:

- (1) God's continued presence and protection (25-30);
- (2) Condemnation of the wicked and blessing of the righteous (31,32);
- (3) Deliverance from their enemies upon their confession of sins (33);
- (4) Help in times of distress (35-40);
- (5) Help for the devout foreigner (41-43);
- (6) Victory in future battles (44-45); and
- (7) National forgiveness (46-53).

The blessing addressed to the people at the close is substantially a brief recapitulation of the preceding prayer (56-61).

Solomon realized that the main issue was the repentance of sins; not the removal of the punishment.

They were once “foreigners”; and must never forget it; but a “God-fearer” is here in mind.

He seems to be having a prophetic vision of the future Babylonian captivity here; when this beautiful Temple will be destroyed.

For some reason, this brief closing statement is omitted in the corresponding Passage in 2 Chronicles.

8:54-61] - These verses also use phrases that are found in Psalms 119; just as (Vs 2:3).

7. SOLOMON’S SACRIFICE (8:62-66)

8:62-66] - This was a burnt offering with its accompaniments, and being the first laid on the Altar of the Temple, was, as it had been in the Tabernacle, consumed by miraculous fire from heaven (see 2 Chronicles 7:1). On remarkable occasions, the heathens sacrificed a hundred animals and even a thousand, but the public sacrifices offered by Solomon on this occasion surpassed all the other oblations on record, without taking into account those presented by private individuals, which, doubtless, amounted to a large additional number. A large proportion of these sacrifices were peace offerings, which afforded the people an opportunity of festive enjoyment; since they could eat the meat of that offering.

The dedication was not a ceremony ordained by the law, but it was done in accordance with the sentiments of reverence naturally associated with edifices appropriated to Divine worship.

“Hallowing the middle of the court” concerns making the whole extent of the priests’ court into a holy altar. Even the huge altar of burnt offerings (2 Chronicles 4:1) would have been totally inadequate for the vast number of sacrifices that distinguished this occasion. It was only a temporary erection to meet the demands of an extraordinary season, in aid of the established altar, and removed at the conclusion of the sacred festival.

This celebration covered the entire land of Israel; from one extremity of the kingdom to the other. The people flocked from all quarters.

The first seven days were occupied with the Dedication of the Temple, and the other seven devoted to the regularly scheduled Feast of Tabernacles (2 Chronicles 7:9). The particular form of expression indicates that the fourteen days were not continuous. Some interval occurred in consequence of the great Day of Atonement falling on the tenth day of the seventh month (1 Kings 8:2), and the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles was on the twenty-third (2 Chronicles 7:10), when the people returned to their homes with feelings of the greatest joy and gratitude “for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David His servant, and for Israel His people”.