

Exegetical Notes – 1 Kings 8:1-21

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1 Kings 8:1-21

Verses 1-2

¹ Then King Solomon summoned into his presence at Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the Lord's covenant from Zion, the City of David. ² All the Israelites came together to King Solomon at the time of the festival in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month.

- When the Temple was finished and all its furnishings in place, Solomon called Israel's elders to assemble before him in Jerusalem. The purpose of this assembly was to bring the Ark of the Covenant into the Temple. King David had already brought the Ark to Jerusalem (see 2 Samuel 6). It had resided in the tent David had constructed for it in Jerusalem. Solomon's intention was to move the Ark into the Holy Place prepared for it in the Temple.
- After the Temple was completed, during the 7th month of the year, the Ark was moved into the Temple. Israel celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles during the 7th month. The moving of the Ark may have happened in conjunction with the Feast of Tabernacles.

Verses 3-5

³ When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the priests took up the ark, ⁴ and they brought up the ark of the Lord and the tent of meeting and all the sacred furnishings in it. The priests and Levites carried them up, ⁵ and King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel that had gathered about him were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be recorded or counted.

- Apparently, the Ark and the Tabernacle tent built to hold it had been separated over time. The Ark was in Jerusalem in the tent David had provided for it but the Tabernacle remained in Gibeon. At this time, the Tabernacle was brought to Jerusalem. This could be why the events happened during the Feast of Tabernacles.

- Solomon and the elders accompanied the moving of the Tabernacle and the Ark to the Temple. As they were moved, the king and the elders offered more sacrifices than could be counted.

Verses 6-9

⁶ The priests then brought the ark of the Lord's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁷ The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark and overshadowed the ark and its carrying poles. ⁸ These poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside the Holy Place; and they are still there today. ⁹ There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

- The priests brought the Ark into the temple and put it in the spot prepared for it beneath the great cherubim in the Holy Place.
- The discussion of the poles which were used to carry the Ark is always problematic. The Ark was basically a rectangular box about the size of the old communion table in the worship center at Cornerstone. The rings which held the poles by which the Ark was carried were at the foot of the four corners of the Ark. They were placed at the feet of the Ark so that when the priests lifted it to their shoulders to carry it, the Ark would be above the heads of the people and so clearly seen by them. Most often, scholars concluded that the poles ran down the long side of the ark (see the picture of the Ark in the NIV Study Bible on page 487). If that were the case, then the poles would have been entirely contained within the Holy Place and not visible from outside it. If the poles were not on the long side of the ark but on the short side, when the Ark was carried into the Holy Place in the Temple, the priests could have carried it straight into the Holy Place without turning it. They would just have carried it to its place and set it down in the correct spot. But the ends of the poles on the front side of the ark would have protruded through the veil that separated the Holy Place from the rest of the Temple. They would serve as a reminder to the people that the Ark, the throne of God, was there in its place. This would also show the great mind of God behind the plan. It would all fit together like a glove. God would have thought of every detail over centuries of time. When the human author of 1 Kings wrote these words, the poles could still be seen.

- In the Ark, at the time it was placed in the Temple, there were only the stone tablets upon which God had written the moral law. Hebrews 9:4 says that there were other items in the Ark as well: Aaron's rod, and a jar of manna. Some scholars say that the Hebrew for Exodus 16:33-34 and Numbers 17:10 does not say that these items were IN the Ark but rather BESIDE the Ark. If they were beside the Ark, it would explain how they had gotten lost and were no longer with the Ark when it was placed in the Temple.

Verses 10-11

¹⁰ When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the Lord. ¹¹ And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled his temple.

- When the Ark was in its place in the Temple and the priests had left the Holy Place, THE cloud filled the Temple. The cloud was so thick that it prevented the priest from performing the rituals. Notice that it is not A cloud but THE cloud (see Exodus 40:33-38). This cloud showed that God was present and that He approved of what His people had done. The cloud showed the glory of God's presence with His people.

Verses 12-13

¹² Then Solomon said, "The Lord has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; ¹³ I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever."

- See Exodus 19:9; 24:15, 18; 33: 9-10; 34:5; Leviticus 16:2; Deuteronomy 4:11; 5:22; Psalm 18:10-11.

Verses 14-21

¹⁴ While the whole assembly of Israel was standing there, the king turned around and blessed them. ¹⁵ Then he said:

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who with his own hand has fulfilled what he promised with his own mouth to my father David. For he said, ¹⁶ 'Since the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city in any tribe of Israel to have a temple built so that my Name might be there, but I have chosen David to rule my people Israel.'

¹⁷ "My father David had it in his heart to build a temple for the Name of the Lord, the God of Israel. ¹⁸ But the Lord said to my father David, 'You did well

to have it in your heart to build a temple for my Name. ¹⁹ Nevertheless, you are not the one to build the temple, but your son, your own flesh and blood—he is the one who will build the temple for my Name.'

²⁰ "The Lord has kept the promise he made: I have succeeded David my father and now I sit on the throne of Israel, just as the Lord promised, and I have built the temple for the Name of the Lord, the God of Israel. ²¹ I have provided a place there for the ark, in which is the covenant of the Lord that he made with our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt."

- Solomon blessed Israel that day and declared that God had been faithful to all His promises.

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