

Exegetical Notes – 1 Kings 8:22-66

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1 Kings 8:22-66

Verses 22-26

²² Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven ²³ and said:

“Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. ²⁴ You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.

²⁵ “Now Lord, the God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your descendants are careful in all they do to walk before me faithfully as you have done.’ ²⁶ And now, God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.

- After blessing the people gathered in the Temple, Solomon addressed YHWH in prayer. His prayer began with praise and thanks to God for keeping His promises to David in regard to building the Temple.
- After acknowledging that God was faithful in keeping those promises, he asked God to be faithful in remembering His other promises to David; specifically, that David’s dynasty would be eternal. This promise was fulfilled in Jesus who was the earthly descendant of David and who reigns forever and ever.

Verses 27-30

²⁷ “But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! ²⁸ Yet give attention to your servant’s prayer and his plea for mercy, Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. ²⁹ May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you

said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place.³⁰ Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

- Solomon then acknowledged that no building can contain God.
- He asked that God hear the prayers he makes and Israel makes for the Temple, and that when God hears their prayers, He forgives them.

Verses 31-32

³¹ "When anyone wrongs their neighbor and is required to take an oath and they come and swear the oath before your altar in this temple,³² then hear from heaven and act. Judge between your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing down on their heads what they have done, and vindicating the innocent by treating them in accordance with their innocence.

- He prayed that when there was a dispute between an Israelite and another and each swears an oath before the altar in the Temple, that God will act and resolve the matter between them justly.

Verses 33-34

³³ "When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, and when they turn back to you and give praise to your name, praying and making supplication to you in this temple,³⁴ then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them back to the land you gave to their ancestors.

- He prayed that when Israel has been defeated by an enemy because of unfaithfulness to God, that God will forgive Israel and bring them back to Himself when they confess their sin in the Temple.

Verses 35-36

³⁵ "When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and give praise to your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them,³⁶ then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.

- He prayed that when Israel suffers famine because of her unfaithfulness to God and turns from her sin and asks God's forgiveness, that He will hear their prayer and restore them.

Verses 37-40

³⁷ “When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come, ³⁸ and when a prayer or plea is made by anyone among your people Israel—being aware of the afflictions of their own hearts, and spreading out their hands toward this temple— ³⁹ then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with everyone according to all they do, since you know their hearts (for you alone know every human heart), ⁴⁰ so that they will fear you all the time they live in the land you gave our ancestors.

- He prayed that when any trouble falls on Israel and they pray to God asking for help from God, that God will hear their prayer and forgive the nation, even if that prayer comes from only one faithful person (see James 5:16b).

Verses 41-43

⁴¹ “As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name— ⁴² for they will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when they come and pray toward this temple, ⁴³ then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.

- Solomon extended his prayer to include those who are not Israelites. He asked God to hear and answer the prayers of non-Jews who come to pray at the Temple.
- He also acknowledged that the people of all the earth are to be called to Him by the way the Jews live and honor God, just as the purpose of the Church is to make disciples.

Verses 44-45

⁴⁴ “When your people go to war against their enemies, wherever you send them, and when they pray to the Lord toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name, ⁴⁵ then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause.

- In times of war, Solomon asked God to hear the prayers of the Israelites when they pray towards the Temple.

Verses 46-51

⁴⁶ ***“When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to their enemies, who take them captive to their own lands, far away or near; ⁴⁷ and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors and say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly’; ⁴⁸ and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their ancestors, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name; ⁴⁹ then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause. ⁵⁰ And forgive your people, who have sinned against you; forgive all the offenses they have committed against you, and cause their captors to show them mercy; ⁵¹ for they are your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out of Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace.***

- Solomon prayed that God would forgive the sin of the people of Israel when they realize their sin and confess their fault to God.
- He acknowledged that no one is perfect and that all have sinned and fallen short (see Romans 3:23).
- (See 2 Chronicles 7:1-14)

Verses 52-53

⁵² ***“May your eyes be open to your servant’s plea and to the plea of your people Israel, and may you listen to them whenever they cry out to you. ⁵³ For you singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance, just as you declared through your servant Moses when you, Sovereign Lord, brought our ancestors out of Egypt.”***

- Solomon prayed that no matter what the concern may be, that God would hear the prayers of His people, because God has loved them and singled them out as His people.

Verses 54-61

⁵⁴ ***When Solomon had finished all these prayers and supplications to the Lord, he rose from before the altar of the Lord, where he had been kneeling with his***

hands spread out toward heaven. ⁵⁵ He stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel in a loud voice, saying:

⁵⁶ "Praise be to the Lord, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses. ⁵⁷ May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our ancestors; may he never leave us nor forsake us. ⁵⁸ May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands, decrees and laws he gave our ancestors. ⁵⁹ And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the Lord, be near to the Lord our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel according to each day's need, ⁶⁰ so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is no other. ⁶¹ And may your hearts be fully committed to the Lord our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time."

- Solomon then stood up from before the altar where he had been kneeling with his hands lifted to YHWH and praised God for His faithfulness to Israel.
- He then charged the Israelites to be faithful to YHWH, living with whole-hearted obedience to Him.
- The purpose of all this was to call people to YHWH from all the nations of the earth. When people saw how God was always faithful to Israel, they would want to live for Him, too.

Verses 62-66

⁶² Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the Lord. ⁶³ Solomon offered a sacrifice of fellowship offerings to the Lord: twenty-two thousand cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats. So the king and all the Israelites dedicated the temple of the Lord.

⁶⁴ On that same day the king consecrated the middle part of the courtyard in front of the temple of the Lord, and there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings, because the bronze altar that stood before the Lord was too small to hold the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings.

⁶⁵ So Solomon observed the festival at that time, and all Israel with him—a vast assembly, people from Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt. They celebrated it before the Lord our God for seven days and seven days more, fourteen days in all. ⁶⁶ On the following day he sent the people away. They blessed the king and then went home, joyful and glad in heart for all the good things the Lord had done for his servant David and his people Israel.

- Solomon then offered many sacrifices to YHWH; so many that the bronze altar could not hold them all.
- 2 Chronicles 7:9-10 explains that the dedication of the Temple took seven days. Following the seven days for the dedication, Israel celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles which lasted for another seven days.
- While the events of the dedication of the Temple were celebrated at the Temple site in Jerusalem, the people of Israel celebrated these events throughout the nation.
- When the celebrations were completed, the people went home. They rejoiced for what God had done to bring blessing to Israel.

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