

TRUE WORSHIP

1 King Chapters 8-10
Key Verse 8:28

“Yet give attention to your servant’s prayer and his plea for mercy, O Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day.”

We must worship God in God’s way. Deuteronomy 12:4 says, “You must not worship the Lord your God in their way. But you are to seek the place the Lord your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling.” Led by Moses the people of Israel had come out of slavery in Egypt. They had experienced the mighty power of God who crushed Egypt with 10 acts of judgment and had led them across the Red Sea as on dry land. They had traveled to the Holy Mountain and there had received the commandments of the Lord. They built a tabernacle in the wilderness according to God’s instructions to Moses. The ark of the covenant which contained the two tablets of stone on which were written the ten commandments was the very heart of the tabernacle. The people traveled through the wilderness and learned to love and fear and trust God. The Priests had carried the ark of the Lord’s covenant on poles so that the pilgrim God traveled with them. Now they had entered and conquered the promised land. King David had found the place which God had chosen for the people to worship. It was Jerusalem, the city of David. The temple was to be built on Mt. Moriah, (where Abraham had almost sacrificed Isaac) on the threshing floor of Aruna. David’s son Solomon had built a magnificent temple. The temple was patterned after the tabernacle in the wilderness. Now was the time to bring the ark of the Lord’s covenant to its resting place in the temple.

1. Solomon’s prayer and blessings

First, the Ark of the Lord’s covenant (8:1-13)

The priests and Levites carried the ark and the tent of meeting and all its furnishings into the temple. The priests carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord on poles and placed it in the inner sanctuary of the temple, that is the Most Holy Place. 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. It was placed under the wings of the cherubim. The cherubim were attached to the atonement cover, the mercy seat. (The priest sprinkled the blood of an animal sacrifice on this atonement cover once a year.) The poles were so long that their ends were visible in the outer sanctuary. God had come to rest in

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his dwelling place. The ark would no longer need to be carried on men's shoulders. The Pilgrim God settled in the place he chose for his dwelling place. For this great and awesome event, King Solomon summoned the elders and heads of all the tribes and families in Israel to participate. Many animals were sacrificed. This Most Holy Place was the place where the almighty sovereign God would meet his people to forgive their sins. It was here that God's righteousness and God's mercy met. This was God's throne. Solomon said, "The Lord has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you a place for you to dwell forever."

When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, a glorious cloud filled the temple. This was the Shekenah glory which filled the first tabernacle in Exodus (40:34,35).

Second, Solomon's blessing (14-21)

While the whole assembly of Israel stood there, Solomon turned around and blessed them. He praised God who fulfilled what he had promised David. God chose David to rule Israel. When David wanted to build a temple for the Name of the Lord, God promised him that his son would build the temple for the Name of the Lord. God kept that promise through Solomon. Solomon built a temple for the Name of the Lord God of Israel. He provided a place for the ark of the covenant of the Lord. God promised with his mouth and fulfilled that promise with his hand. God is a God who makes promises and keeps them.

Third, Solomon's prayer (22-53)

Solomon knelt before the altar in front of the whole assembly and spread his hands out toward heaven (54). He praised God for keeping his covenant of love, for making a promise and keeping his promise regarding the temple. Now he claimed the promise God made to David to establish David's dynasty forever. God promised David, "You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me as you have done."

Next, Solomon acknowledged the smallness and inadequacy of the great temple he had built. "Will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you (O God). How much less this temple I have built?" Even so, he asks God to hear his cry and prayer. He prays that God's eyes may be open toward the temple night and day. Because God's Name is there in the temple, God will surely listen to the prayers of his people when they pray toward

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the temple. God's name represents his person, his character. He is righteous and merciful. He loves. He is an awesome God, a God to be feared. What is the main prayer topic of God's people? It is a prayer for forgiveness. The temple is the place where sins are forgiven. The righteous and merciful God hears from heaven the prayers offered in the temple and when he hears, he will forgive. (8:30)

The temple is a place of repentance and forgiveness. When God hears from heaven the repentant cries of one who is accused of wronging his neighbor, he will hear and judge and condemn the guilty and establish the innocence of the innocent. When God's people are defeated by an enemy because they have sinned, and they confess the name of the Lord and make supplication to him in this temple he will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and restore their land. When God has withheld rain because of the people's sin, and they pray toward the temple and confess God's name and repent, God will hear from heaven and forgive them and send rain. Other disasters also happen because God loves them and punishes them for sin. He will hear from heaven when they repent and confess his name and pray toward the temple. God whose name dwells in the temple knows each person's heart. He alone knows the hearts of all men. He deals with each person who comes to him, teaching each one to fear God and live a humble and repentant life before God.

The temple is a house of prayer for all people. Solomon prays that God may hear the prayers of foreigners who hear of God's great name and come to the temple to pray. He prays that the foreigner may be granted whatever the foreigner asks, so that it may be clearly seen that God is the Lord of all the earth. He prays that all the people of the earth may know God's great Name and fear him. He asks that God may hear the prayers of his people when they go to war-- when they pray to the Lord toward the temple that Solomon built for the Name of the Lord. He prays that when God's people sin and are taken into captivity and pray and repent facing the temple, they may be forgiven and restored to their land. He reminds God that this people are his people and that they are his inheritance, that he singled them out from among all people and brought them out of the smelting furnace of Egypt, and he again asks God to hear them when they pray toward the temple where his Name dwells.

Fourth, a blessing and a warning. (54-61) Solomon finished his prayer and stood up and faced the people again. He blessed the whole assembly in a loud voice, again praising God who keeps all his promises. He has world mission vision and he asks that God may uphold the cause of his servant and supply all the needs of his people "...so that all peoples of the earth may know that a the Lord is God and that

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there is no other. He reminds the people that “your hearts must be fully committed to the Lord our God to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time.”

Fifth, the dedication of the temple (62-66) The king and all Israel with him offered thousands of animal sacrifices to God in order to dedicate this temple. The bronze altar was too small, so Solomon consecrated the middle of the courtyard as an altar for burnt offerings. They celebrated for two weeks; then, he sent the people home. They were full of joy and glad in heart because of all the good things the Lord had done for his servant David and for his people Israel.

Sixth, the Lord appears to Solomon a second time (9:1-9) The Lord had appeared to Solomon in Gibeon just before the construction of the temple began. Solomon went to Gibeon and offered a thousand burnt offerings on the altar there. This was the place where the bronze altar made by Bezel was kept. After this lavish offering, the Lord appeared to Solomon and invited him to ask for whatever he wanted. He had asked for wisdom to be a good shepherd for his people, and God was pleased. So he had promised to give him not only wisdom but also riches and honor. God kept his promise.

Now after the temple was dedicated, the Lord appeared a second time. This time, the Lord said, “I have heard the prayer and plea you have made ...I have consecrated this temple, which you have built by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.” (9:3-5) This promise, however, was conditional. God also promised that if Solomon’s descendants did not observe God’s commands and laws and decrees and if they worshiped other gods, he would cut Israel off and reject this temple which God had consecrated for himself. If the people worshiped other gods, God would not spare them. God kept his promise. Israel did not keep God’s laws; they worshiped other gods. They were taken into captivity and the temple was destroyed. But our great God found another way to keep his promise. He sent Jesus to be the true temple. It is through his blood that we are forgiven. It is in his name that we pray. He is the King who sits on David’s throne forever.

2. Solomon’s Splendor (9:10-10:29)

Solomon was a builder. He built the temple of the Lord and his own palace in 20 years. He continued to co-work with Hiram king of Tyre, but he did not treat Hiram fairly and had some co-working problems. (9:10-14) He used forced labor in his building projects. He built Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer. He built Lower Beth Horon, several other cities. He built store cities for his horses. He built whatever he

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wanted to build in Jerusalem, Lebanon and throughout the territory he ruled. He built a special palace for Pharaoh's daughter. He built ships and sent his ships to Ophir for gold. He used some Israelites in forced labor, but he did not make Israelite slaves. He did, however, enslave the foreign people who lived in the land. In these things, Solomon showed that he did not read the Book very carefully. In Deuteronomy 17:14-20 are Moses directions for a king. These directions were written before there was a king, before the time of the monarchy. A king should not acquire a great number of horses for himself; he should not take many wives; (he should not marry foreign women); he must not accumulate large amounts of gold and silver. He should keep a copy of the Scriptures before him and read them and obey them. He should not think that he is better than his subjects, for they are his brothers. He should not think that he is above the law.

Solomon's wealth and wisdom were renown. People came from everywhere to hear his wise words and to marvel at his wealth. Even the Queen of Sheba came to visit him and she was amazed at Solomon's wealth and she praised God who had blessed Israel with such a wonderful king. "King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart." Year after year everyone who came brought magnificent gifts. (10:23,24) He had everything a man could dream about. But we read in the book he wrote these words, "Meaningless! Meaningless! ...Utterly Meaningless! Everything is meaningless." (Eccl 1:2) Pleasures are meaningless; toil is meaningless; wisdom is meaningless. "Hear is the conclusion of the matter; fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." (Eccl 12:13)

True worship is the worship of the Almighty Creator God. God must be worshiped in his way. Worship must include repentance, for sinful man cannot approach the Holy God without a repentant heart. We must fear God and keep his commandments and worship him in his way.