

I KINGS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Kings chapter 8 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we have seen in our previous studies, Solomon is the king in Israel and one of his first projects was to build the temple. And this magnificent structure took 7 years to build and now that it is completed, as we will see this evening, the temple will be dedicated and what a celebration it was. With that said, let's begin reading in I Kings chapter 8, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

I KINGS**VERSES 1-2**

1. Keep in mind that David brought the Ark from Gibeon to Mount Zion, to the city of David and placed it in a temporary structure until the temple was built. And remember that the city of David was located on the southeast portion of Jerusalem and during the reign of Solomon the city has grown, Jerusalem is much larger!

2. Now we are told that the temple was completed in the eighth month and yet, this took place in the seventh month, some 11 months later, why is that? There are a few reasons that Solomon waited. Some say that it was so the people could gather in their fruits and they were now free to come up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Others say that it was because it was now the year of Jubilee. In either case, Solomon waited these 11 months and now it was time to bring the Ark of the Covenant into the temple, into the holy of holies!

VERSES 3-9

1. Years earlier, when David tried to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, he brought it on a cart and when the cart hit a rock and almost fell over, Uzzah tried to steady it and the Lord struck him dead. (II Samuel 6). And David was angry, he was afraid and let the Ark of the Lord stay at the house of Obed-Edom for 3 months. It wasn't until David read the Scriptures that he then transported the Ark of the Lord correctly. We are told in I Chronicles 15:2-3 regarding this incident with the Ark, **“Then David said, ‘No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites, for the Lord has chosen them to carry the ark of God and to minister before Him forever.’ And David gathered all Israel together at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the Lord to its place, which he had prepared for it.”**

It seems that Solomon learned from the mistakes of his father David and he transported the Ark of the Lord correctly to Jerusalem, upon the shoulders of the priests and specifically the Kohathites. And what a celebration it was, there was so many sacrifices made to the Lord that you couldn't count them!

2. Keep in mind that the Ark of the Lord was an important piece of furniture in the holy of holies; it was the place where God dwelt, above the mercy seat between the cherubim. And yet, during Jesus' day they did not have the Ark of the Lord in the rebuilt temple, it was missing. Maybe the reason it was missing is because, "**... the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**" John 1:14. In other words, the presence of God was with them, Jesus and thus, the Ark was not needed!

The Ark of the Lord went missing during the Babylonian invasion and the captivity of the Southern Kingdom of Israel. If you read of this event in II Kings chapter 25 there is no mention of the Ark of the Lord being taken by the Babylonians, even though many of the other temple implements are mentioned. Thus, many speculate that Jeremiah, who was prophesying of the Babylonian captivity, hid the Ark of the Lord in one of the storage areas under the temple and some Rabbis today claim to know where it is at and they are waiting for the temple to be rebuilt before they bring it out. Is that true? I don't know but the bottom line is this, they don't need it to start the sacrifices when the temple is rebuilt but if they found it, that would really encourage them to get this structure up and running!

3. We are told that Moses put the two tablets of stone, the Ten Commandments written by the hand of God on this stone, into the Ark of the Covenant at Mount Horeb. Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai, where God gave the children of Israel His Law, or instructions to live by. Now we are told, at the time of Solomon, that all that was left in the Ark of the Lord was the two tablets of stone or the Words of God, (Deuteronomy 10:4-5, Hebrews 9:4). You see, Aaron's rod that budded, showing that he was the one God had called over all the other tribes of Israel as the priest and putting an end to their murmurings, was no longer in the Ark, (Numbers 17:10, Hebrews 9:4). Also, the pot of Manna, the food, which God provided to Israel during their wilderness wanderings, was no longer in the Ark, (Exodus 16:33-34, Hebrews 9:4). And God is reminding them of the covenant that He made with them over 500 years earlier as He delivered them out of Egypt.

4. Now you may wonder why this is even mentioned here, why is this important to us? Why do we need to know that these two things were missing from the Ark of the Lord? Maybe the Lord is showing us that these two things that were missing, the budded rod of Aaron and the jar of manna, we might call them signs and wonders, will pass away. And notice what is left! It is the Word of God and the Scriptures tells us that the Word of God will never pass away. Jesus said in Mark 13:31, **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”**

Today many believe that we need signs and wonders to save those that are lost. I disagree. God can use signs and wonders but I don't think that is the primary way that people are saved. I know that may shock some of you but listen to what is spoken of John the Baptist, whom Jesus said was one of the greatest prophets that ever lived. In John 10:40-42 we read, **“And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. Then many came to Him and said, ‘John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true.’ And many believed in Him there.”**

What was the focus of John's ministry? Not signs and wonders but speaking the truth, sharing the Word of God! You see, it is not signs and wonders that save you; it is the Word of God that transforms people's lives. Peter picks up on this in I Peter 1:23-25 when he says, **“having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because ‘All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the Lord endures forever.’ Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”**

Does that mean that we don't see signs and wonders today? Absolutely not, God still uses signs to point people in the right direction. He still uses wonders to show people His power, but His Word opened up to them by the Spirit of God saves people! It is as Paul said in Romans 1:16, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”** May we not negate the power that God has given to us, His Word!

VERSES 10-11

1. Here we see the presence of God, the Shekinah glory as the Jews called it, fill the temple and the priests could no longer minister. Some will argue that they were slain in the Spirit, but we don't see that in the Scriptures. The reason they could no longer minister is because God's presence, His holiness filled the temple.

We too cannot approach God in our sinfulness but we don't approach God alone, we have a better access to God and that is through Jesus Christ and it is His righteousness that fills our lives and because of that we can boldly come into the presence of God! Paul put it like this in Hebrews 4:16, **“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”** The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace (the throne of God’s unmerited favor to us sinners), that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it].”**

We can approach God the Father only through Jesus Christ!

VERSES 12-21

1. As Solomon speaks before the people he is reminding them of God's faithfulness and how He brought them out of Egypt and brought them into this land and now He has placed His Name on this city, Jerusalem. Isn't it interesting today that the so-called Palestinians want this land, the Roman Catholic Church wants this land and yet, God said that He gave this land to His people, the Jews!

This city, Jerusalem has been given to the Jewish people. Take a good look at its history! In around 1003 B.C. David conquered the stronghold of the Jebusites and declared Jerusalem as the capitol of Israel. And you know what; it has **NEVER** been the capital of any other country or people! I bet you didn't know that! Yes, other groups of people occupied the land, but it was never the capital of any other nation!

Again, many like to say that the land of Israel doesn't belong to the Jews because they have only returned in 1948. As we have seen, that is untrue; there is no historical basis to believe that! Jews have always been in the land of Israel since God brought them there during the time of Joshua. But also, think about this. Saudi Arabia was not created until 1913. Lebanon was not created until 1920. Iraq did not exist as a nation until 1932. Syria did not exist as a nation until 1941. The boarders of Jordan were established in 1946. And Kuwait, it was established in 1961. All these countries were under the control of the Turks prior to that and yet no one would deny their existence or right to the land, would they? But they do of the Jewish people and as I have said, there have always been Jews in the land of Israel and in 1948 they once again became a nation just as the Bible said would happen!

And think about this and you tell me whose land it is. The word "Israel" is found some 2,567 times in the New King James translation of the Bible. The word "Jerusalem" is found some 821 times in the New King James translation of the Bible. And yet, in the Koran it is not found once, even though Muslims insist that it is their third holiest sight. Go figure!

Listen to what David said in Psalm 132:13-18, **“For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: ‘This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation, There I will make the horn of David grow; I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame, But upon Himself His crown shall flourish.”** God has chosen not only the Jewish people but also the land of Zion, Israel for Himself and for them to dwell in. For the Jewish people, this is the city of God, Jerusalem, and it is the place where the Lord will come back one day and set up His Kingdom so He can rule and reign. This land is God’s and He gave it to the Jewish people, may we not forget that!

VERSES 22-23

1. Notice that when Solomon makes this prayer he does so before the people, he wants them to see the faithfulness of God, that there is no God like our God. The so-called gods of the pagans are empty, they can’t do anything because they are not god and yet, our God is a God who is actively involved with His people!

VERSES 24-26

1. Solomon is asking God to fulfill what He has promised to his father David, that his descendants will continue to rule and reign from Jerusalem over the land of Israel as long as they walk according to the Lord’s ways, they follow after Him!

2. For us, I know we understand the promises that God has given to us, but do we believe them? I think many times we trust more in the promises of man than we do God's promises to us. Think about it, say you are getting \$3,000 back from the government and they right you a check. In a sense, it is a promise note that when you take it to the bank you will get that \$3,000 and thus, you do it because you believe that the government has the resources to pay you, a least they do right now! And yet, God promises to be with us and never leave us and many times we don't take that to the bank you might say. We are going through tough times and we cry out, "God, where are you?" He is with us, always has and always will, do we believe it is the question! May we believe and act upon the promises that God has given to us!

VERSES 27-30

1. Please understand that Solomon did not think that God was a local god, like the pagans did. Solomon rightly recognizes that no temple could hold God. Isaiah 40:12 clearly reminds us that God measures the universe with the span of his hand. A span was the distance from your thumb to your little finger, usually about 9 inches. We have been told that the universe extends for some 12 billion light years. Now a light year is the distance that light will travel in one year. Light travels at 186,000 miles per second and I don't think we can calculate that distance, thus we have come up with light years. You see, the heavens of heavens cannot contain God. His presence fills the universe.

Today many feel that you can only come before God at church as He dwells upon the altar or on the cross, or whatever. God fills our hearts, our lives, and where we go, He goes with us. If your God is located in some object of worship, it shows that you have lost the consciousness of God in your life. Solomon recognized this fact and so must we; God cannot be contained in a building!

2. We also see Solomon mention prayer and that when they pray they are to look, not towards Mecca but Jerusalem, the holy city, the place where God dwells. Even today we see Orthodox Jews praying towards Jerusalem, towards the temple, as Solomon instructed them to do. Daniel also did this during his Babylonian captivity and during the time he was under the reign of the Medo-Persian Empire. He prayed three times a day facing towards the Temple.

3. Now we are going to see Solomon list some examples of sin that can hinder or separate one's relationship with God. And his prayer is when that occurs, and it will occur, that when the people repent of their sin, that God will hear and forgive them. Solomon is not praying for justice, but forgiveness, God's grace and mercy to be extended to His people and we too pray for His grace and mercy in our lives!

VERSES 31-43

1. Solomon lists these sins, when you take an oath that you need to carry it out. When God's people are defeated in battle because of sin, forgive them. When there is plagues and famines in the land, forgive them. And to even hear the prayer of the foreigner who has come to know of your great Name, forgive him. Isn't that interesting, Solomon includes foreigners in this list.

Solomon wanted all to come and know the true and living God, and not the Jew only. Over time the Jews felt that God was only for them and the Gentiles were only created to fuel the fires of Hell. How tragic that they had God for themselves and were not willing to share Him with anyone else. May we never do that! It always amazes me when I hear people say that your faith is personal and therefore you should keep it to yourself. The fact is, just the opposite is true. We should not hold back what will truly transform people's lives - *JESUS CHRIST!* Imagine having a cure for cancer and not sharing it with anyone. People would be upset, angry, they would force you to give them the cure for cancer. And yet, we have the cure for sin, which is a deadly disease and yet, we want to keep it to ourselves and that makes no sense! Jesus said, **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”**

Matthew 28:19-20. May we do that!

VERSES 44-53

1. Here is this celebration, the dedication of the temple and Solomon is praying that when they sin and are taken into captivity that God would hear their prayer and forgive them of their sin and deliver them from their captivity, what a downer! How can Solomon say that? Because he knew that “**there is no one who does not sin**” and that is what Paul reminds us in the New Testament, “**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**” Romans 3:23. And like the Jews, it is when we come to the end of ourselves, and seek God, repent of our sin, that He will forgive. The first time is for salvation, that we accept Jesus as our Lord and savior, and after we are saved it is for fellowship for sin can break our fellowship with God, we can't lose our salvation.

VERSES 54-61

1. As Solomon finishes up this prayer he concludes with the faithfulness of God, that His promises never fail and thus, he is encouraging the people to follow after the Lord, to walk in His ways because as you do there are blessings for obedience. The same is true in our lives. Think about it. God says that drunkenness is wrong. It is a sin. Now we can obey the Lord and in that there is the blessing. If we choose not to and we get drunk, we can have all kinds of things happen to us. Such as being arrested for drunk driving, violence, immoral sexual activity, and even death! You see, God is not some kind of cosmic killjoy, but what He tells us to do is for our benefit not to hurt us. May we listen and trust in His Word, His promises to us!

VERSES 62-66

1. As Solomon completes this prayer they have a huge sacrifice unto the Lord, with a peace offering unto Him. And remember in the peace offering that God would get a portion, the priest would get a portion and you would get a portion of this barbecue. It was showing that you were at peace with God, at one with Him.
2. As the people returned home on the 15th day of this celebration, they went home rejoicing. That is the way people should leave the presence of God, rejoicing and with a glad heart. Yes, there are times of conviction when God is exposing areas of our life that need to be changed, but there is also joy knowing that God loves us so much that He is trying to get us back on track. There is fullness of joy in the Lord that should permeate our lives and that joy should be taken into the world as we share the love of Christ with those around us!
3. As much as there was this great celebration, the reality is, the prayer of Solomon would come to pass, the king and the people would turn from the Lord as Adam Clarke points out for us. He wrote, "How happy must these people have been, and how prosperous, had their king continued to walk uprightly before God! But alas! The king fell, and the nation followed his example." May we learn from that example and walk with the Lord all the days of our life!

I KINGS 9**VERSES 1-3**

1. We are now some 24 years or so into Solomon's reign, the temple is completed, which took 7 years and his house is down, which took 13 years and the Lord appears to Solomon, a second time as He appeared to Solomon in a dream at Gibeon back in I Kings chapter 3. And God is affirming that He has heard Solomon's prayer from I Kings chapter 8, which must have brought Solomon great comfort and joy. And notice, as we read on that this is a conditional promise to Solomon and the Jewish people, that they needed to walk in the Lord's ways and then God would bless them.

VERSES 4-5

1. Notice that God places David as the standard from which all other kings will be judged by. Now that may seem strange, seeing that David sinned, that he was far from perfect, and yet God calls David a man after His own heart. (I Samuel 13:14). Why? First of all David had a problem with his flesh, and at times he went to satisfy his flesh. But David never went after idols. His heart was loyal towards God all the days of his life. David was not perfect, but his heart was loyal to the Lord.

David said in Psalm 18 starting in verse 20, **“The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the Lord, And have not wickedly departed from my God. For all His judgments were before me, And I did not put away His statutes from me. I was also blameless before Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity. Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to the cleanness of my hands in His sight.”** Psalm 18:20-24. We can’t fool God and do we really want to? I don’t think so. David may have failed at times, but in his heart he loved the Lord and repented of his sin and got right with God. Thus, as I have said, God will use David as the standard to measure the walk of the kings in Israel!

VERSES 6-9

1. God tells Solomon that there are consequences if they turn from Him, they will be cut off from the land. And, tragically, this did come to pass. They did not heed God’s warning and both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah fell into idolatry and were removed from the land! You see, after Solomon’s reign, under the reign of his son Rehoboam, the kingdom is divided. There is the Northern Kingdom of Israel that had its capital in Samaria. And the Assyrians captured the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. Then there was the Southern Kingdom of Judah that had Jerusalem as its capital. And the Southern Kingdom of Judah was captured and its city destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 B.C.

Now here is the thing to remember. Paul tells us in I Corinthians 10:12, **“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”** The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“Therefore let anyone who thinks he stands [who feels sure that he has a steadfast mind and is standing firm], take heed lest he fall [into sin].”** In other words, for Solomon, in his mind, idolatry was probably the farthest thing. He never thought he would fall into idolatry and yet, he did and it caused the nation to follow after him. We need to be wise, we only stand in the Lord and when we are not walking with Him, we are in danger of falling!

2. And the Lord tells Solomon what will take place if they turn from Him. He says that the temple, the land and the people will be in ruins because of the idolatry they were in. And a land where people came to see the wisdom of Solomon and the glory of the God he served, now only shake their heads in amazement at what they see, the devastating judgment of God upon them for rejecting their Lord. The Living Bible puts I Kings 9:7 like this, and listen carefully to what it is saying, **“then I will take away the people of Israel from this land that have given them. I will take them from this Temple which I have hallowed for my name, and I will cast them out of my sight; and Israel will become a joke to the nations and an example and proverb of sudden disaster.”** May our Christian life not be a joke to people because of the way we live it!

It is as proverbs 14:35 says, “**Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.**” Thus, we not only can apply this to our own lives but also nations, and specifically for us, this nation as you see a change of heart in people that once wanted to come to this God fearing nation, and now are fearful to step foot upon the soil of a nation that has become immoral and violent. God was not only speaking to Israel, the principle is still the same, if you turn against God, you will reap what you have sown! People will shake their heads at what has happened to us and we will be a joke to them because we as a nation have turned from the Lord!

VERSES 10-14

1. Keep in mind that Tyre was the prominent city north of Israel, modern day Lebanon and the king sent to Solomon fine wood for the building projects and men to work on this. Now, in verse 14 it should read, “**Hiram had sent the king.**” In other words, these verses speak of a loan that Solomon took out from Hiram, king of Tyre, for this building project. In return, Solomon gave him 20 cities in the upper Galilee area, thus increasing the borders of Tyre. The problem was that Hiram was not happy with what he got in return for his money; he saw these cities as worthless. Thus, he called these cities “Cabul” or “good for nothing”!

VERSE 15

1. Obviously there was a lot of work to be done and thus, to complete this massive building project Solomon had a forced labor force, slaves, from other nations. Now keep in mind that the city of Jerusalem had the Kidron Valley to the east, the Valley of Hinnom to the south, and the Tyropoeon Valley to the west. The only vulnerable spot was from the north and that is where the Romans built the Fortress of Antonio during the time of Jesus.

The word “Millo” means “the filling in” and it seems that Solomon filled in an area of the Tyropoeon Valley, to the west, in order to enlarge the city and build the walls.

Hazor was located above the Sea of Galilee, to the north. Megiddo was located in the Valley of Jezreel, one of Solomon’s stable cities. And Gezer was in the area of western Judah.

In regards to Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer, Patterson and Austel tells us this:

“Recent work has demonstrated that these three cities had certain characteristics in common with regard particularly to their fortifications attributable to the Solomonic era . . . Most distinctive are the gate complexes, which are identical in plan and virtually of the same dimensions in all three cities.”

“Hazor was strategically placed in the north (c. three miles north of the Sea of Galilee), being situated at the juncture of the two major highways approaching from the north. It became Israel's chief bulwark against northern invaders until it was destroyed in the eighth century by Tiglath-pileser III.”

“Megiddo was the great fortress that controlled on the major passes from the Plain of Sharon on the coast into the Valley of Jezreel through the Carmel range. It figures in prophecy as the staging area for the last great battle (Armageddon) in which Christ will defeat the forces of the Antichrist.”

“Gezer, on the road from Joppa to Jerusalem, had been a powerful Canaanite city. Though it was included in the tribal territory of Ephraim, it was not occupied by the Israelites until the time of Solomon. Then it was given to Solomon as a wedding gift by Pharaoh to his daughter.”

- Patterson and Austel

VERSES 16-19

1. Notice that whatever Solomon wanted to do, whatever he wanted to build, he did. That is a dangerous place to be, whatever we want to do and not what the Lord wants us to do! You see, material possessions overtook his love for the Lord and it will affect his walk with the Lord.
2. Notice also that Gezer was a gift given to Solomon by Pharaoh, as a dowry for his daughter.

VERSES 20-21

1. God said that the children of Israel should remove them from the land, wipe them out, destroy the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, the Promise Land but they didn't and now Solomon uses them as forced labor for his building projects. It may not sound like a big deal, but as you start on that slippery slope of compromise it is amazing at how far you can travel!

VERSES 22-24

1. The children of Israel were not part of this labor force, these slaves but they were the supervisors, the ones in charge over the slaves. And even the military was involved in these building projects. You may wonder how that can happen and it is simple, during the reign of Solomon they enjoyed times of peace and prosperity and thus, if the military men were not fighting, you might as well put them to work and he did!

VERSE 25

1. Remember in Deuteronomy 16:16 we are told, **“Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed.”** This was before they were in the land, before the temple was built but God said that three times a year, Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles the Jewish males were to appear before the Lord at the place He has chosen, Jerusalem and Solomon is just carrying through with what the Lord has said.

VERSES 26-28

1. Solomon develops a navy, and since they were not a sea faring people, he hires Hiram to send his men to oversee this operation. The Phoenicians were very experienced at sailing and thus Solomon has ships stationed in the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. From these ships we will see Solomon acquire more and more wealth and possessions from far away countries. And please understand as I close; money, wealth, possessions are not evil or wrong, but it is the love of these things that is wrong because it will take your eyes off the Lord and Solomon will find that out.

Listen to what Paul tells us, as I begin to close this evening, in I Timothy 6:6-10, **“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”** Do you see the danger in the love of money, wealth and possessions? I hope you do.

Now you may wonder what we can do? Well, Paul tells us as he continues on here in I Timothy chapter 6, starting in verse 11, **“But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.”**

I Timothy 6:11-16. Stay focused on the Lord, seek first His Kingdom and righteousness and all that you need He will provide for you. May we learn the lesson!