

# Solomon's Blessing

Bible Background • 1 KINGS 8:54–66

Printed Text • 1 KINGS 8:54–61 | Devotional Reading • PSALM 136:1–16, 23–25

## Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: EXAMINE Solomon's prayer of dedication, AFFIRM God's continued faithfulness to His people, and COMMIT ourselves to obeying God's commands.

## In Focus

Charlotte had dreamed of opening a flower shop. She and husband Gerald had saved and invested their money quite well. After praying and seeking God, Gerald and Charlotte found a space not too far from where they lived. Next, they scheduled the grand opening two months later.

Gerald walked around admiring the flowers. "This flower shop is going to do great. I am amazed at the variety of flowers you have."

"Thanks. But we have to have customers to buy flowers. I invited everyone at church and put an ad in the local paper. I also put flyers in our neighbors' mailboxes at the community center. I pray we have a good turnout for our grand opening tomorrow."

The next day Charlotte and Gerald arrived early to attend to every detail. Charlotte was in the back of the store preparing more flowers to sell. Gerald went to the back of the store and said, "I think you need to come up front for a moment."

Charlotte could not believe her eyes as the tears welled up. There were over a hundred people lined up outside waiting for the opening of the store. Gerald said, "Let's just go ahead and open the doors for these people. They want flowers." Charlotte nodded. Their grand opening was a success, and the flower shop continued to do great business.

*Why is it important to seek God's direction before implementing a plan?*

## Keep in Mind

"May the LORD our God be with us as he was with our ancestors; may he never leave us or abandon us. May he give us the desire to do his will in everything and to obey all the commands, decrees, and regulations that he gave our ancestors" (1 Kings 8:57–58, NLT).

## Words You Should Know

**A. Rest (v. 56)** menuach (Heb.) — To repose or relax peacefully; consolation, peace and quietness

**B. Perfect (v. 61)** shalem (Heb.) — Complete, whole

## Say It Correctly

none.

### KJV

**1 Kings 8:54** And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.<sup>55</sup> And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying,

**56** Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

**57** The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us:

**58** That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.

**59** And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require:

**60** That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else.

**61** Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.

### NLT

**1 Kings 8:54** When Solomon finished making these prayers and petitions to the LORD, he stood up in front of the altar of the LORD, where he had been kneeling with his hands raised toward heaven.<sup>55</sup> He stood and in a loud voice blessed the entire congregation of Israel:

**56** "Praise the LORD who has given rest to his people Israel, just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the wonderful 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 or abandon us.

**58** May he give us the desire to do his will in everything and to obey all the commands, decrees, and regulations that he gave our ancestors.

**59** And may these words that I have prayed in the presence of the LORD be before him constantly, day and night, so that the LORD our God may give justice to me and to his people Israel, according to each day's needs.

**60** Then people all over the earth will know that the LORD alone is God and there is no other.

**61** And may you be completely faithful to the LORD our God. May you always obey his decrees and commands, just as you are doing today."

## The People, Places, and Times

**Solomon.** David's second son by Bathsheba was special to the Lord from the very beginning of his life, as the prophet Nathan told David to call the boy Jedidiah, "beloved to God" (2 Samuel 12:25). Several of David's other sons attempted to take the throne after their father, but Bathsheba knew God had chosen her son to take the kingship. She reminded David of this, and David used his kingly power to ensure Solomon would rule after him. At the beginning of his reign, God offered to grant Solomon any wish, and when Solomon humbly asked for wisdom, God granted him wisdom and all the wealth and power he could have asked for, too. Solomon undertook the massive building project of the Temple that his father David had prepared for him to do. Solomon also built a grand palace for himself. Solomon affirmed the worship of the Lord God throughout Israel, and the nation prospered. However, Solomon also took wives from all the surrounding nations as a way to establish good relations between the peoples. These wives brought their gods with them and led Solomon and the nation into idolatry. Solomon's successor, Rehoboam, was not a wise ruler, and the nation split into two kingdoms soon after Solomon's reign ended.

## Background

King Solomon was the successor to the throne after his father David died. He was known as the wisest man to have lived in his time. God granted him the privilege of building the Temple. He was able to use the finest building materials to erect the Temple and make its appearance splendid. It would be a permanent place of worship for the Israelites and contain the Ark of the Covenant.

As recorded in 1 Kings 8, King Solomon offered three prayers during the dedication ceremony: the first in verses 14–21; second in verses 22–53; and the third in verses 54–61. The first prayer in verses 14 through 21 concentrated on God’s promise to Solomon’s father, David, to always have an heir from his family sitting on the throne throughout eternity (2 Samuel 7:5–16).

The second prayer in verses 22 through 53 concentrates on the expression of gratitude to God for His faithfulness to His promises and a plea to believe God hears our prayers. King Solomon reminded the people that God’s presence is not confined to a building. God is everywhere. Therefore, the message was that when they found themselves far away from the Temple in Jerusalem, if they would physically turn toward the Temple and pray, God would hear and respond. Today, Christians only need to call on the name of Jesus in prayer wherever they find themselves. Our location and physical posture are not important. It is the spiritual condition of our hearts that matters.

*What role does prayer have in our success as we engage in new endeavors?*

### At-A-Glance

1. Renewed Commitment (1 Kings 8:54–58)
2. Requesting God’s Help (vv. 59–61)

## In Depth

**1. Renewed Commitment (1 Kings 8:54–58)** The third prayer King Solomon offered during the dedication of the Temple is in verses 54–61. After the conclusion of the second prayer in verses 22 through 53, he stands up and faces the people. He has humbled himself in the sacred space that will be used to worship and honor God. He understands the historical and spiritual importance of the dedication of the Temple for the Israelites at that moment and in the future. Now he has to address the people of Israel who have assembled for the historic occasion (vv. 54–55).

The priests were the ones who blessed the people (Numbers 6:23–27). However, Solomon’s “blessing” here is actually a prayer of blessing and praise to God. King Solomon praises God for rest from Israel’s enemies and His faithfulness (v. 56). His father, David, was a great warrior who defeated many of the nations who were enemies of Israel (2 Samuel 7; 1 Kings 5:3–4). These nations had not been eradicated when Israel took possession of the Promised Land in Canaan (Judges 1). The nation is now at rest from the threat of attacks because David defeated these enemies. However, this made David a warrior who had shed blood, which disqualified him from building the Temple. God was gracious and promised David that his son would be the one to do it.

Solomon and his generation of Israelites need God’s presence just as much as their ancestors did (v. 57). God promised to “not fail thee, nor forsake thee” (Deuteronomy 31:6). But King Solomon knew there was a commitment needed on their part to “incline our hearts to him” to keep the covenant. The Israelites, like us, had a tendency to stray away from God. If we love God, we should obey His laws and commands, not our own desires. We have to yield our hearts, minds, and souls totally to Him.

*How does God’s presence make a difference in our lives?*

**2. Requesting God’s Help (vv. 59–61)** King Solomon was appointed by God to serve. However, he recognized his and the people’s necessity of requesting God’s help meeting daily needs (v. 59). We, too, have to seek God to provide our daily needs so we will not yield to the temptations of the world. God will provide for His people. We can depend on Him.

As the people obeyed God and daily needs were provided, King Solomon hoped that God’s glory would be known in the world (vv. 60–61). People are always watching those who call themselves Christians. They want to see if we are living the life we confess to believe in. What will people conclude by watching you? The world needs God to be a light in your life so they can know He is real.

*How does God provide help in meeting our daily needs?*

### **Search the Scriptures**

1. Why did King Solomon say, “blessed be the LORD” (1 Kings 8:56)?
2. How could the Israelites “incline our hearts” toward God (v. 58)?
3. How can the world know “the LORD is God” (vv. 59–60)?

### **Discuss the Meaning**

1. For a long period of time, the Israelites did not have a permanent place to worship God. How do you think the building and dedication of the Temple influenced them to recommit their lives to God?
2. We need God’s presence in our lives. How can we draw closer to God and discern His will?

### **Liberating Lesson**

When we endeavor to develop a church project or ministry, it must begin and end with prayer. Prayer is necessary to discern the will of God. Every good idea is not God’s plan. Sometimes, when we do not have success with our church projects or ministry ideas, perhaps it is because the flesh is trying to get the glory and not God. We can become competitive in the church and want to outdo other churches that have flourishing ministries.

King Solomon prayed that God’s presence would be with him and the nation of Israel. He recalled God’s faithfulness to their ancestors and desire for God’s presence to continue to be with them. When we have God’s presence and know we are following His commands, our church projects will succeed. But do not get caught up in the number of people reached. Maybe the purpose of the project or ministry is to reach one specific person or a small select group. For example, you may pool your resources over five years to help one inmate be exonerated and released from prison. It is a success since it fulfills God’s divine plan.

### **Application for Activation**

We may find achieving our goals does not bring the result that we imagined. God desires for us to submit to His will by obeying His laws and commands. Once we align our lives with God, He can direct us according to His divine plan. It becomes easier to know what to do because the Holy Spirit helps us understand the needs of others. In today’s world, there are people who need help enrolling in health plans, obtaining housing, finding a job, someone to listen to them, court advocates, mental health counseling, treatment for addictions, food for their families, warm coats, and so on. Even if we help one person, that is success. Why? You changed their life with one act of kindness and love. This enables others to see God in you. Then, God gets the glory, which is the ultimate goal.

### **Follow the Spirit**

What God wants me to do:

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## Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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## More Light on the Text

**1 Kings 8:54–61** The construction of the Temple of the Lord has been completed; the whole congregation of Israel has gathered at the Temple courts for its dedication. The Ark of the Covenant, which was brought from Zion, the city of David, is now positioned in its place in the Temple (vv. 1–13). King Solomon stands in front of the altar and addresses the people. He recites the promises God made to David: that his heir would be the one to build the Temple in His name, and that God would faithfully fulfill His Word. Solomon has ascended the throne of his father David and has completed the Temple (vv. 14–21). He then devotes much time to addressing God, interceding on behalf of his people in prayer. He asks God to forgive his people when they sinned, to have mercy on them when they repent, and deliver them from calamities pronounced upon them as consequences of their sin (vv. 22–51). Then Solomon turns his attention to blessing the people and praising the Lord for His faithfulness (vv. 54–61).

**54 And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.**

Verse 54 serves as a transition from the previous thought to the next part of the narrative. The verse starts with the phrase, “And it was so,” which translates to the Hebrew word *hayah* (HAW-yaw). It is often rendered “it came to pass, it happened,” or “it follows that.” It connects the preceding thought to the subsequent; it also introduces the next part of a story.

After Solomon has concluded his “prayer and supplication” to the Lord, he gets up “from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.” The words for prayer,—*tephillah* (teh-feel-LAW), which means “intercession” and “supplication,” and *techinnah* (teh-kheen- NAW), which means “entreaty or plea,”—are used synonymously here (see last week’s study under v. 27). The use of the two words shows the intensity and gravity of Solomon’s prayer “unto the LORD.” Here “the LORD” is the Hebrew word, *Yahweh* (YAH-way), which means “the Self-Existent or Eternal”; it is also rendered *Jehovah* (yeh-ho-VAW), “the existing One.” *Yahweh* is the Jewish proper name of the one true God. The name is considered sacred to the Jews, and in reverence, it is never pronounced.

After the somewhat extended prayer, Solomon stands from his kneeling position with his hands stretched toward heaven. At the beginning of the prayer, “kneeling” is omitted. Rather, it reads, “Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven” (v. 22). However, the same account in 2 Chronicles reads, “he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven” (2 Chronicles 6:13–14). It means that Solomon stands on the platform and, facing the audience, he addresses them (vv. 14–21). After speaking to the people, Solomon kneels facing the altar and with outstretched hands toward heaven, he prays to *Yahweh*.

This is the first time kneeling in prayer is mentioned in the Bible. Kneeling is a common posture for prayer and worship in the Bible (Ezra 9:5, Daniel 6:10, Luke 22:41, Ephesians 3:14). Socially, kneeling down before a superior is a show of humility, respect, and worship. This practice is common in some African traditions where respect is extremely important; one kneels down or prostrates when one meets or sees an elder, king, or

traditional ruler to greet him. Solomon and other biblical figures seem to be conscious of this. So he humbly and in reverence kneels before the sovereign, promise-keeping God and prays.

After praying, Solomon rises from his kneeling position “with his hands spread up to heaven.” At the beginning of this prayer, we read that he “spread out his hands toward heaven” (v. 22, cf. 2 Chronicles 6:13). It implies that Solomon had his hands stretched out toward heaven throughout the prayer—he never let them down. One raises one’s hands before an officer of the law when under arrest as a show of surrender and vulnerability—under the mercy of a superior, especially God. Lifting hands is also a common posture for worship in both the Old and New Testaments. It is also a common mode of worship among Christians in many contemporary churches.

**55 And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, 56 Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.**

Solomon has been kneeling in prayer on the platform near the altar, with his hands lifted toward God. He now stands to give his people a blessing. The word “blessed” is used twice here, once for the people and the other for God (vv. 55–56). It is the Hebrew *barak* (baw-RAK). The same word, used with slightly different meanings. The first blessing to the congregation of Israel means that he pronounced a blessing or benediction on the people—normally a priestly duty (Numbers 6:22–27). However, in a ceremonial occasion such as this, the king could give the blessing as David did after the Ark was brought to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:17–18). The use of *barak* in verse 56 seems to focus on God but is also directed toward the people. The phrase “Blessed be the LORD” is an act of adoration and worship; it can also be rendered “praise be to God.” It is an outburst of praise aimed at expressing the faithfulness of God for all He has done for them and for giving His people rest as He promised. Solomon emphasizes this truth with the clause, “there hath not failed one word of all his good promise.” The word “rest” comes from *menuchah* (men-oo-KHAW), which means “to repose or relax peacefully, consolation, peace, and quietness.”

As Solomon reviews the history of the Jewish nation, his conclusion is that the promises of God have never failed, not even once. He promised Moses that He would give the nation rest (Exodus 33:14, Deuteronomy 25:19). He empowered Joshua to defeat the nations in Canaan and claim the land for Israel’s inheritance. He also promised Moses that when they had entered into the promised rest, God would give them a sanctuary where they could offer their sacrifices and worship God (Deuteronomy 12:1–14). Now that sanctuary has been provided. And after the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, the Lord gave Israel a period of rest from their enemies (Joshua 11:23, 21:44–45, 22:4).

Solomon knows the history of Joshua, and he says, “There hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.” This is a quotation he gleans directly from Joshua’s farewell speech to the leaders where Joshua emphasized the same truth of God’s faithfulness (Joshua 21:45; 23:14–15). Although rest from their wilderness wandering was granted to the people under Joshua, there still remained land left to possess (Joshua 13:1; Judges 1). It was only after David’s conquests that complete and lasting rest was granted to Israel (2 Samuel 7:1; 1 Kings 5:4). That promise is now totally fulfilled without missing an iota and was now being celebrated at the dedication ceremony.

**57 The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us: 58 That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.**

In addition to the previous blessing, Solomon highlights God’s faithfulness in keeping one important promise God gave to his ancestors and often repeated throughout their history: the promise that the Lord would never leave His people or forsake them. The Lord made this promise to Abraham (Genesis 17:19, 21); He promised to be with Isaac (Genesis 26:3, 24) and with Jacob (Genesis 28:15; 31:3; 46:1–4). The promise was renewed with Moses (Exodus 3:12; 33:14); Moses repeated it to Joshua (Deuteronomy 31:7–8).

The Lord Himself also reassured Joshua of the promise (Joshua 1:5, 9; 3:7) and fulfilled it (Joshua 6:27). Gideon received the promise (Judges 6:15–16), and the prophet Samuel repeated it to the nation (1 Samuel 12:22).

Solomon obtained the same promise from David when he chose him to build the Temple. Solomon now calls on God to help him and his people to have hearts inclined to the Lord and to be willing to walk in His ways and eager to obey His commandments. Solomon asks God for divine work of grace within his people to enable them to be faithful to their own part of the covenant (Deuteronomy 30:6; Psalm 51:10–12). Without God, we can do nothing. Our faith is a gift; even our desire to obey is the work of grace (Ephesians 2:8–9).

**59 And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require: 60 That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else.**

To conclude his prayer, Solomon appeals to the Lord to remember all the prayer and supplication he brought before Him on behalf of himself and of his people. He further asks the Lord to keep watch over all the requests and to meet his and the needs of his people accordingly. It is gratifying to know that no sincere prayer offered to the Lord is ever forgotten; He hears and remembers our prayers and answers them in His time and in His own way (see Revelation 5:8 and 8:3). The purpose of the people's faithful obedience and the Lord's faithfulness to answer their prayers is that all the nations of the world will also come to "know that the Lord is God, and that there is no other god besides the Lord." Their obedience coupled with answers to their prayer will encourage other nations to trust the Lord God of Israel. How encouraging to know that the prayer of one man could touch and influence a whole world!

**61 Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.**

Solomon ends the prayer part of the dedication ceremony by calling on the people to maintain a good relationship with the Lord as they have that day. He asks three things from them. First, "Let your heart be perfect with the Lord our God." The word "perfect" comes from the Hebrew shalem (shaw- LEM), which means complete, whole. That is, they should have undivided obedience to the Lord—they should yield totally, and wholly devote themselves to God and not to other gods (1 Kings 9:6). Unfortunately, Solomon later failed in this area (1 Kings 11:4). Second, they should walk in His statutes; and third, they should keep His commandments. In this nontechnical context, there is no meaningful distinction between statutes and commandments. Keeping them is how Israel will keep their hearts perfect before God. Solomon ends by encouraging the people that they are to keep God's commandments "as at this day." He assures them they are currently doing everything correctly in their worship of the Lord. All they have to do now is keep it up.

# Daily Bible Readings

## MONDAY

Hezekiah Restores the Temple  
(2 Chronicles 29:3–11)

## TUESDAY

Solomon Seeks Wisdom to Govern  
(1 Kings 3:5–14)

## WEDNESDAY

Solomon's Success Based on His Obedience  
(1 Kings 9:1–9)

## THURSDAY

Solomon and God's Glory Compared  
(Matthew 6:25–30)

## FRIDAY

Temple Completed and Dedicated  
(2 Chronicles 7:1–6)

## SATURDAY

Festivities Ended; People Return Home  
(2 Chronicles 7:8–11)

## SUNDAY

Solomon Blesses the People; Urges Faithfulness  
(1 Kings 8:54–61)