

# Solomon's Dedication Prayer

Bible Background • 1 KINGS 8:22–53; 2 CHRONICLES 6:12–42

Printed Text • 1 KINGS 8:22–30, 52–53 | Devotional Reading • 1 TIMOTHY 2:1–6

## Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: ANALYZE the importance of a national temple for Israel, EXPRESS gratitude for God's faithfulness in covenant relationships, and EMBRACE a worshipful lifestyle in light of God's continuing goodness.

## In Focus

Claudine and her husband, Gus, moved to Miami, Florida, after they both retired from the Ohio State Police Department. The winter season in Ohio was harsh. They desired to live in a warmer climate. They liked the weather and the people they met. But there was one aspect of living in Miami they disliked. They could not find a church similar to home.

One day Brian, their next-door neighbor, invited Gus and Claudine to join him and his wife at church on Sunday. Gus hesitated in responding because Brian attended a nondenominational church. Gus had to convince his wife to go with him. "It will not hurt to just go this one time. I know they are of a different race and worship experience. Maybe it will be a good experience." Claudine reluctantly went.

They attended the 8:00 a.m. worship service with Brian and his wife. When they entered the sanctuary, the praise and worship team was leading the congregation in songs. There were multigenerational families of different nationalities in attendance. After a few minutes, Claudine whispered to Gus, "I feel God's presence in this place." The pastor's sermon inspired them to make a commitment to return for another visit.

*Why is it important in the midst of life transitions to be in a covenant relationship with God and others?*

## Keep in Mind

"May you hear the humble and earnest requests from me and your people Israel when we pray toward this place. Yes, hear us from heaven where you live, and when you hear, forgive" (1 Kings 8:30, NLT).

## Words You Should Know

**A. Prayer (v. 28)** tefillah (Heb.) — Intercession

**B. Supplication (v. 28)** tekhninah (Heb.) — Plea or entreaty

## Say It Correctly

**Sinaitic.** sie-nee-IH-tick.

### KJV

**1 Kings 8:22** And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven:<sup>23</sup> And he said, LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart:

24 Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.

25 Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me.

26 And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.

27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?

28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day:

29 That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.

30 And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

52 That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee.

53 For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O LORD God.

### NLT

**1 Kings 8:22** Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire community of Israel. He lifted his hands toward heaven,<sup>23</sup> and he prayed, "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in all of heaven above or on the earth below. You keep your covenant and show unfailing love to all who walk before you in wholehearted devotion.

24 You have kept your promise to your servant David, my father. You made that promise with your own mouth, and with your own hands you have fulfilled it today.

25 And now, O LORD, God of Israel, carry out the additional promise you made to your servant David, my father. For you said to him, 'If your descendants guard their behavior and faithfully follow me as you have done, one of them will always sit on the throne of Israel.'

26 Now, O God of Israel, fulfill this promise to your servant David, my father.

27 But will God really live on earth? Why, even the highest heavens cannot contain you. How much less this Temple I have built!

28 Nevertheless, listen to my prayer and my plea, O LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is making to you today.

29 May you watch over this Temple night and day, this place where you have said, 'My name will be there.' May you always hear the prayers I make toward this place.

30 May you hear the humble and earnest requests from me and your people Israel when we pray toward this place. Yes, hear us from heaven where you live, and when you hear, forgive.

52 May your eyes be open to my requests and to the requests of your people Israel. May you hear and answer them whenever they cry out to you.

53 For when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt, O Sovereign LORD, you told your servant Moses that you had set Israel apart from all the nations of the earth to be your own special possession."

## The People, Places, and Times

**The Temple Altar.** The altar built in Solomon's Temple was made of cedar and gold. It stood directly in front of the Temple gates, between the gates and the inner sanctuary. Priests needed to use a ramp to reach the top of the altar, as it was about 15 feet high. There was space on the altar to burn several offerings at once, since it was about 900 square feet (2 Chronicles 4:2). Even when no one was giving an offering to God, a fire always burned on the altar as a reminder of God's constant presence with His people. Jewish tradition says that Solomon's altar was built on the exact spot where God took the dust from the ground to make Adam. With the old covenant's emphasis on sacrifice, the altar served as the center of godly worship until the Temple was destroyed.

## Background

King David was very old and living out his last days as ruler of Israel when he was faced with a crisis (1 Kings 1). His son, Adonijah, crowned himself the next king outside of Jerusalem. This was not God's plan. Once King David was informed of Adonijah's self-appointment as the next king, he had to take corrective action.

As King David instructed him, the priest Zadok anointed Solomon with sacred oil in the city of Gihon and declared him the next king. Adonijah's plans were thwarted, and he was granted a reprieve.

Before he died, King David's last instructions to his son Solomon were for him to be strong, courageous, and totally obedient to God in all aspects of life (1 Kings 2). It was the only way to be a successful ruler. Solomon also had to deal with any opposition to his reign as king from Adonijah and others before his kingdom was firmly established.

God spoke to King Solomon in a dream and told him to ask for anything he wanted (1 Kings 3:5ff.). King Solomon asked for wisdom to lead the people, so it was granted by God. He was the wisest man to have ever lived. He wrote Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, many of the Proverbs, and some of the Psalms.

King Solomon set his mind to build the Temple (1 Kings 5). His father David was forbidden by God to do so. But God promised David his son who sat on the throne would be the one who built the Temple. King Solomon gathered the materials, some from across the world, and had the Temple built (1 Kings 6–7). He brought in all the vessels His father David had dedicated and stored them in the Temple.

*Why is it important to obey the commands of God to ensure a better future?*

### At-A-Glance

1. Pray and Give Thanks (1 Kings 8:22–26)
2. Pray and Believe (vv. 27–30, 52–53)

## In Depth

**1. Pray and Give Thanks (1 Kings 8:22–26)** King Solomon waited until the end of the harvest seasons, during the Festival of Booths, to dedicate the Temple (8:1). Before the dedication of the Temple, the Ark of the Covenant was transferred from the Tabernacle (tent) to the Temple. The Temple represented a permanent place for the people to worship God. 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 concentrates 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 is the fundamental core of the dedication ceremony. King Solomon showed reverence to God. He entered into the inner sanctuary and knelt in front of the altar with hands stretched toward heaven as he prayed (v. 22).

King Solomon expressed gratitude to God for being faithful to the covenant made with his father (2 Samuel 7:13). God is faithful even when we may not be. And as time passed, the people of Israel were not always faithful in keeping God's commands. But in spite of their (our) sinful ways, God would always have a successor to sit on the throne of Israel, which King Solomon petitioned God to fulfill (v. 25–26). God's promise (1 Kings 2:4) was fulfilled through the birth of the Messiah who was a part of the Davidic line.

*Why is expressing gratitude to God important?*

**2. Pray and Believe (vv. 27–30, 52–53)** God's presence was manifested in the Temple through the visibility of a cloud. King Solomon acknowledged in his prayer that in spite of the beautiful Temple he had built for God, not even heaven was vast enough to contain His presence (v. 27). God is omnipresent, so He cannot be confined to one specific location. No one can rightfully say God is only present at their place of worship. Our God can be wherever and with whomever He desires. Today God does not need a temple as a visible symbol of His invisible presence. God lives in our hearts.

King Solomon asked God to hear his prayers and pleas to be forgiven, as well as those of the people of Israel (v. 30). This included when they were in the Temple and in other locations. It is traditional for the Israelites to pray facing the Temple in Jerusalem if they are not actually able to pray in the Temple. As Christians, we can pray and seek forgiveness no matter our physical position. God only requires we have a humble, repentant heart. He hears us and will respond.

King Solomon closed the prayer by reminding God about the covenant made at Mount Sinai with Moses and the Israelites after the exodus from Egypt (vv. 52–53; Exodus 19:5–7). The Mosaic covenant set the commands the Israelites had to obey as God's chosen people. Since they were still God's chosen people, King Solomon petitioned God to remember and respond to His people's prayers.

*Why is prayer vital in our relationship with God?*

### **Search the Scriptures**

1. What posture did King Solomon take at the altar before he prayed (8:22)?
2. What promise did God make to David (8:25)?
3. When and whom did God speak to concerning the Israelites being His inheritance (chosen people) (8:53)?

### **Discuss the Meaning**

1. King Solomon understood the importance of building a place where people could worship God. What benefits would the Israelites gain from having a new national temple? What benefits do we enjoy in coming together in a specific place for worship?
2. The dedication of the Temple was an exciting and inspirational event in the Israelites' lives. What role does prayer take in our worship of God? How would the Temple dedication influence their future?

### **Liberating Lesson**

It is a blessing to have a space dedicated to worshiping God. The space may or may not be in a church building. Sometimes believers gather in hospital rooms, prisons, parks, open fields, or under trees for worship. This does not mean God's presence is not with them. We have to be careful not to box God in and think God is only present in our faith community. God is omnipotent and omnipresent. God is always present with His people. He lives in our hearts.

God has been faithful toward us. Even when we have not done what is right, God still blesses us. All that God requires is that we pray and repent of our sins. God can and will restore us just like He repeatedly did for the Israelites. It is not too late to make things right between you and God. Today is the day. He loves us. Take a moment and think about all the ways God has blessed you. Why not give thanks and worship God? God is worthy.

## Application for Activation

Since God is present at all times, we can call on God in prayer and know God hears us. Our circumstances may seem dismal, but God knows about it. The world seems to be more and more hateful and divisive. Instances of hate crimes are present via various mediums. What can we do? “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). God hears us and will provide guidance in what steps to take. Moreover, we have to take advantage of every opportunity to worship God. When we develop an attitude of praise and thanksgiving for all God has done and has yet to do, it will change our lives and those around us as well. This will help future generations know about God’s faithfulness to His promises.

## 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 8:22–30, 52–53** We read in 2 Samuel 7 that David had proposed to build a house for the Lord, a place of worship where the Ark of the Covenant of God would rest. Instead of David, the Lord promised him that his offspring and the heir to his throne would be the one to build the Lord’s temple (2 Samuel 7:12–14). Solomon inherits his father David’s throne; he becomes the king and assumes the task of building the Temple for the Lord (1 King 2). The Temple is completed with specified details and furnishings according to the Lord’s promise to his father David (1 Kings 6–7). The people assemble in Jerusalem to dedicate the Temple. The Ark of God’s covenant is brought from Zion, David’s city, and placed in its place in the Temple (1 Kings 8:1–13). Solomon addresses the people explaining God’s fulfilling His promise to his father David (vv. 14–21). He then addresses the Lord in prayer on behalf of his people (vv. 22–53).

### **22 And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven:**

After assembling the people in the Temple courts, Solomon stands before the altar of the Lord. In other words, Solomon stands in front of the altar of the Lord, rather than inside the Temple building reserved only for the priestly and Levitical order in worship. It appears that Solomon positioned himself between the altar and the congregation, facing the people.

The verb “stood” describes Solomon’s posture during the prayer. It is customary for the Jews to stand or kneel with hands raised in prayer, petition, and praise to the Lord (Exodus 9:29, Isaiah 1:15). This posture in prayer was also practiced by New Testament Christians and is still practiced by contemporary Christians. The posture implies looking up toward heaven to God in faith and total surrender and expectancy as they wait for the answer. The Chronicler’s account of this event says that Solomon knelt on the special platform near the altar as he offered this prayer, lifting his hands to heaven (2 Chronicles 6:13). The lifting or raising up of one’s hand also represents total surrender, helplessness, and dependency to a superior or higher authority—in this case to God.

**23 And he said, LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart: 24 Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.**

Lifting up his hands to heaven, King Solomon begins his prayer of dedication with worship and thanksgiving to the covenantkeeping God for His faithfulness in keeping His promises. Using the personal name “LORD” Yehovah (yeh-ho-VAW), Solomon describes Him as the supreme “God” ‘elohiym (eh-low-HEEM) of Israel. The Bible places Israel as God’s chosen people (Exodus 19:5- 6; Deuteronomy 9:26, 29; 14:2). Peter equates all believers also as God’s unique and chosen people (1 Peter 2:9). Solomon’s phrasing of “God of Israel” can be read as acknowledging that God has chosen Israel and also as promising that Israel has chosen God. King Solomon then expresses the uniqueness of Yahweh: “There is no God like Thee in heaven above, or on earth beneath” (cf. Exodus 15:11). The uniqueness of this God is that He keeps “covenant” (Heb. berith, beh-REETH) and “mercy” (Heb. khesed, KHE-sed) with those who walk before Him with all their heart. A covenant is a solemn agreement between two parties, often a king and his subjects, defining the rights and responsibilities of each party in the relationship. God’s relationship with His people has been defined by covenant since Noah, through Abraham, and to Moses. God’s mercy has always been one of His defining characteristics, one of the first times He is named is when He reveals Himself to Moses (Exodus 34:6).

Solomon then refers to God’s promise made to his father, David, that one of his sons would be heir to the throne and the builder of the Temple (2 Samuel 7:12–15). By fulfilling the blessing promised to His people through Solomon, the Lord has proved Himself to be the faithful God in heaven above and the earth beneath. Israel could not deny God’s faithfulness in keeping His promises and covenant.

**25 Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. 26 And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.**

Solomon prays to God to fulfill His promise to David—the perpetuity of a Davidic dynasty. Based on God’s past faithfulness, Solomon asks for the ultimate fulfillment of this promise to keep someone on the throne of Israel as long as they walk righteously before God. He then concludes invoking God’s personal relationship with His people with the phrase “O God of Israel.” This promise is conditional, which God reiterated to Solomon (1 Kings 6:12–13). God will allow disobedience for a time, waiting for us to repent or not wanting to appear too harsh to pagan nations. Ultimately, though, God’s blessings are only for those who faithfully follow His ways. So long as the Israelites obeyed, God would keep a continuous line of kings on David’s throne. The ultimate realization of this promise is in Christ Jesus (Luke 1:26–33, 67–75; Acts 2:29–30; Romans 1:3).

**27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? 28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee today:**

Solomon is overwhelmed by the greatness of God in contrast to the insignificance of the work he had done in building the Temple. He realizes with the improbability of such a mighty God dwelling on earth, how much less would He be in the Temple made by man’s hand. He rhetorically questions, “But will God indeed dwell on the earth?” and supplies the answer by an affirmation of the truth. Since not even “the highest heaven” is big enough to accommodate Him, there is no way “this house that I have built” could do so. Solomon had expressed the same truth to King Hiram of Tyre before he began to build (2 Chronicles 2:6). The Lord affirmed this truth through the Prophet Isaiah, “The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me?” (from Isaiah 66:1). Stephen referred to these words from Solomon and Isaiah in his defense before the Jewish council (Acts 7:47–50).

Preaching to the Athenian Gentiles on Mars Hill, Paul emphasized the same truth about God whom they unknowingly worshiped (Acts 17:22–25). It is amazing that, though heaven cannot contain God, He is willing to live in the hearts of those who love Him. He cannot be restricted, He is omnipresent, and His presence can be felt everywhere His name is called. How comforting to know the God of the universe takes up residence in His people. This is amazing grace!

Such knowledge leads King Solomon to solicit God’s attention to prayer and supplication, which he makes to Him. Here Solomon uses two complementary nouns for “prayer” *tefillah* (teh-feel-LAW) meaning “intercession,” and “supplication” and *techinnah* (teh-kheen- NAW) meaning “plea or entreaty.” Here prayer or intercession speaks of a petition on behalf of somebody or something. In this case, Solomon is interceding on behalf of his people Israel. Supplication speaks of an appeal or plea made to somebody in authority, one who has the power to grant the request. With the use of these two words, Solomon emphasizes the urgency of his plea on behalf of his subjects and the need for God to “hearken” (Heb. *shama’*, shaw-MAW, listen closely or pay attention) to his cry and to the prayer, which he presently brings before Him. Solomon then proceeds to lay his petitions and requests to God on behalf of his people (vv. 29–53).

**29 That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. 30 And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.**

Solomon continues his prayer by asking the Lord to keep His watchful eyes over the Temple “night and day”—to hear the prayer of His people. The phrase “night and day” speaks of the constancy and consistency of God’s attention toward the Temple. That is to say, God will make the Temple His residence because He will manifest His gracious presence there. Not only does Solomon ask for God’s watchful eyes over the Temple, he solicits, figuratively speaking, that God’s ears be open to the prayers of the people and to answer them when they prayed toward the Temple.

A good relationship must be in place before one can ask for a favor from another. So it is with God. Sin hurts the relationship between God and His people (Isaiah 59:1–2). Solomon is aware of the impact of sin and the terms of God’s covenant relationship with His people Israel (Deuteronomy 28–29). He also knows the calamities the Lord promised to send as a discipline if Israel disobeyed His law. Therefore Solomon asks the Lord to forgive the sins of his people when they pray in or toward the Temple. Solomon is equally aware of the Lord’s grace of forgiveness and restoration if God’s people would repent and turn to the Lord (Deuteronomy 30). The clause, “when they shall pray toward this place” indicates that when an Israelite is unable to pray in the Temple, he or she is to direct his or her prayers toward the Temple where the Lord had pledged to be present among His people. It was customary for Jews, wherever they might be, to pray facing toward Jerusalem or the Temple. Daniel prayed for his people looking toward Jerusalem (Daniel 6:10); Jonah looked toward the Temple and prayed, and God forgave him (Jonah 2:4). Although God dwells in heaven, He says “My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations” (Isaiah 56:7, Mark 11:17).

**52 That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee. 53 For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O LORD God.**

In verses 31–51 King Solomon presents seven specific requests, which cover different calamities that would befall the people as a result of disobedience and sin. These calamities are listed in Deuteronomy as curses on Israel for breaking the covenant (Deuteronomy 28:22, 25, 38, 42, 59; 31:17, 29; 32:24). In verses 52 and 53, Solomon concludes his petitions by calling on God to hear His people whenever they cry out in prayer. To wrap up the section, Solomon ends the same way he started his petition. He again asks the Lord to keep His eyes open to both his and his people’s prayers and to hearken to their requests. Solomon then appeals to God’s

covenant relationship toward His people Israel. The word “separate” comes from the Hebrew verb badal (baw-DOLL), meaning to “sever, distinguish or select.” Solomon seems to remind the Lord that among all the nations of the world, He singled Israel out to be God’s own inheritance.

This is a promise God made with Moses at Mount Sinai when He brought them out of Egypt. It is generally referred to as the Mosaic or Sinaitic covenant (Exodus 19:5). In this whole prayer (1 Kings 8:23–53) Solomon called on God, who had been faithful to His promises in the past, to continue to be faithful and to show mercy to His people in the future. The outcome of a genuine confession and forsaking of sin is God responding to His people’s prayers. It is comforting to know that our God is not restricted to a place, in a manmade cathedral or temple, but He is everywhere His name is worshiped and magnified. Jesus says, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). More importantly, He dwells in the hearts of those who worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23–24).

## **Daily Bible Readings**

### **MONDAY**

Pray for all Secular Leaders  
(1 Timothy 2:1–6)

### **TUESDAY**

Forgiveness of Sin Against Another  
(1 Kings 8:31–32, 41–44)

### **WEDNESDAY**

Forgive Each Other Generously  
(Colossians 3:8–13)

### **THURSDAY**

Encourage Each Other in Facing Difficulties  
(1 Corinthians 15:1–11)

### **FRIDAY**

A House of Prayer for All Peoples  
(Isaiah 56:3–8)

### **SATURDAY**

Captives Receive God's Gifts  
(Ephesians 4:1–8, 11–16)

### **SUNDAY**

God's Promises Are Kept  
(1 Kings 8:22–30, 52–53)