

## VV 19 July: Dedication of Solomon's Temple

[1 Kings 8](#), [2 Chronicles 5-6](#)

These notes focus on 1 Kings 8 but please refer to 2 Chronicles 5,6 as well.

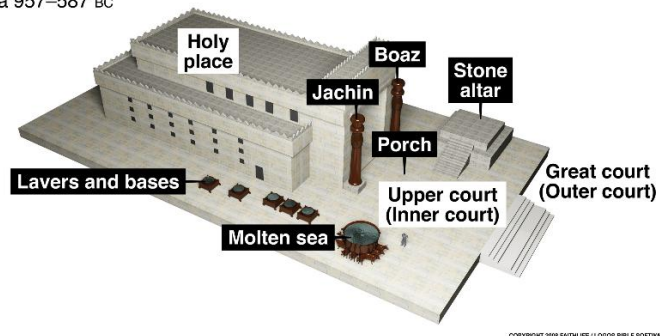
### The Temple

Last week, I was a little confused by the description of the temple so I have pasted a couple of pictures of artist model's of the temple for us to refer to if needed.



### Solomon's Temple

Circa 957–587 BC



### The temple is finished and the ceremony begins

In this chapter, everything is done and set out, most likely in the order of the original tabernacle. There is no record of God actually saying “build it like this” as he did with Moses and the tabernacle. God essentially leaves it up to Solomon to design the thing according to his original instructions to Moses. God seems less hands on, while Solomon seems to oversee everything.

- Why do you think God was happy to step back and let Solomon do his thing, while, with Moses, he gave much more detailed instructions?

The priests bring in the ark. For some odd reason, the lengths of the poles that carry the ark are noted as being very long. The ark contains only the stone tablets of the ten commandments.

Then the dark cloud of God's presence fills the temple. In verses 12 & 13, Solomon sees this presence of God and declares that he has built a magnificent temple for God. The transfer of all things from the tabernacle to the temple goes smoothly.

In the New Testament, it states that we (believers) are now the temple of the Holy Spirit.

- Discuss parallels between Solomon's temple and the idea of the believer now being the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Solomon then launches into a narrative about how he came to be the one to build the temple. Verses 20, 25, 25 and 26 talk about the Lord keeping Their promise to David and Solomon, referring back to the Exodus.

- Reflect on how God keeps promises.

## **Solomon's Prayer of Dedication**

Solomon's prayer of dedication is interesting and I wanted look at certain aspects of his prayer. In verse 27 Solomon asks how can the Temple, or the Earth, contain God. He asks God to be merciful towards him and the people of Israel and to hear their prayers when they pray in or towards the temple and forgive. I was interested in how Solomon goes through what the purpose of the temple is, not for personal or national aggrandisement, but a place where the people can meet with God and bring their petitions. Solomon's prayer turns the ways that people will need to come to the temple and Asks God to forgive:

- When someone wrongs their neighbour and asks God to condemn the guilty and vindicating the innocent.
- When they have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned. Solomon asks that God forgive and bring the people back to their nation.
- When there is a drought because of the people's sin. He asks God to forgive and teach them the right way to live to relive the drought and bring rain.
- Solomon lists a range of afflictions, such as locusts and plagues, and likens them to the afflictions of the human heart and asks God to forgive.
- To hear their prayers in times of war.

I would like to pause here and reflect on how Solomon's prayer focuses on not so much about God giving them greatness, but on the people themselves being great through spiritual growth by coming to God when they have sinned.

- Discuss Solomon's focus on the confession and forgiveness of sin in his prayer of dedication

As I was reading verses 46-50, I was struck by how it appears to reflect the future eventuality of the Jews going into captivity in Babylon because of their sin or wandering away from God.

- Discuss

Solomon turns to the people and gives a blessing (the prayer and the blessing are the other way around on 2 Chronicles). He talks about covenant, including the people's requirement to be obedient and God taking care of the nation. The chapter outlines sacrifices and offerings given, that to us might seem over the top but to them appropriate. This was a grand affair in which people from outside Israel also attended.

One of the things that struck me was that Solomon here is taking on the role of not just king but of prophet and priest as well. He is both a political and religious leader.

- Given that we live in a world where theocracy seems to be a negative thing, what is the difference (if any) between the theocracy of Solomon and many of the theocracies we see today.