



This week in the Word
based on the International Bible Lessons for Christian Teaching
Sponsored by - The First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Toronto



Solomon's Speech

Study Scripture: 1 Kings 8: 14 – 21
Background Scripture: 1 Kings 8: 1 – 13

Lesson 7 January 11, 2020

Key Verse

And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David and with His hand has fulfilled it.

1 Kings 8:15

INTRODUCTION

Our Lesson Study Text raises the critically important question of how we should respond to the demonstrated values of the faithfulness of God, His beauty, His loyalty, His perseverance, His kindness, His mercy, and the incredible favour He has granted us by identifying Himself with us and keeping His people united in fellowship with Him.

This God kept His presence with the nation of Israel despite their unfaithfulness to Him over many generations and despite the constant pounding messages of the prophets. God who has taken them out of slavery in Egypt, protected them from Pharaoh's army, made a covenant with them on Mount Sinai and had stayed with them in the movable Tent sanctuary which confirmed the presence of God with the chosen people throughout their wilderness wandering.

Now the nation was no longer wandering nomads but established in their **own land** which God promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The first king of Israel Saul had disobeyed God and his position was taken away. God had raised up his successor David to unite the tribes and granted him power to defeat the countries surrounding Israel.

David had had problems within his own household but he wanted to build a Temple which would replace the movable tabernacle and which would stand before the nations as the sign of the presence of the LORD. From now on the LORD would be associated not with Mount Sinai but with Mount Zion the Temple Mount.

As the previous Lesson stressed it is probably impossible to overemphasize the significance of the Temple and the city in which it was located, namely Jerusalem, to the nation of Israel.

At the same time though the Covenant at Sinai would still be in force but the emphasis would now in addition be with another, the Covenant God made with David to establish the line of David forever. It is however to be carefully noted that David had established the nation and increased its size tremendously but he was a man of blood, and had done things as he rose to power and established the nation that without any doubt would cement his reputation as a dangerous king and not a man to be

toyed with. God therefore would not allow him to build the Temple. That task would have to be carried out by his son, a man of peace.

David showed humility, did not argue with God's decision, and begun massive preparation for a grand Temple which he himself would never build but would be built by his son. We learn from this and this is particularly important for young people as one writer notes:

“that God does not hold others responsible for our fathers’ indiscretions but sometimes he assigns us to carry on our fathers work . Solomon's legacy was to build the first Temple. He would complete his father's dream because David had too much blood on his hands to be worthy of the task”.

Our lesson today is a lesson for leaders who have verbally committed themselves to build a house of God. It expresses how one should approach this matter of relationships which involve a strong identity with the Lord God.

We should be warned that this relationship with God is not something that should be taken lightly for it has definite and powerful implications for every believer whether or not they think that there is such a thing as divine discipline.

As we look at Solomon speech we therefore understand that this is an appreciation speech given to acknowledge the immeasurably kind deeds of God as He had remained faithful to the covenant promises to Abraham Isaac and Jacob despite the many ups and downs in the nation and the many moral and spiritual lapses of Israel.

Note therefore that God’s behaviour has obvious implications for all of us who call on the name of Christ. We too have many lapses. God remains faithful if our heart is set on Him indicating that we are true believers.

Basically Solomon was not in his speech simply thanking God, but he was also letting everyone who heard his voice know and appreciate that in fact the nation owed everything to God and that they too should fully appreciate their Lord God. Their response to the speech was important for that indicated by their heart response that they were in agreement to what he was saying.

Remember therefore that when a preacher says something that's important and you are going to respond with a Hallelujah or an Amen you should make sure that their heart is in it for God is watching you. Many therefore will stress and constantly remind believers that they should have a heart of gratitude and thankfulness.

So as we study we should note several elements and factors in Solomon’s speech, namely,

1. The being that is above all is God. It is He who is being thanked
2. There is reason for thanking God
3. There are reasons why your appreciate what God has done for your people, your nation, your family, and your church and what it means to you in particular, since your relationship with God should be a personal one.
4. There is great importance to being attentive to the powerful conclusion and inspiring message which involves a call to action. Gratitude and thankfulness calls for action.

God wanted Israel to appreciate not only the role that David had played in the nation’s development but the role that Solomon would play. Solomon's speech of Dedication would therefore be very important

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for it would have to first precede his prayer by laying down the reasons for the elaborate and beautiful construction of the Temple.

This is therefore a model speech for all servants of God who are making a public declaration in a formal setting about the goodness of God.

Recognize that whatever we do **has only been possible because of the goodness of God. Even though we know we have participated in the work of God it is only because of God's graciousness that we are even allowed to do so.**

Our success comes because we have participated in accomplishing the will of God.

Note above everything that God is a Keeper of promises. **He** has kept His promises to the **nation of Israel** and will even keep it in future, for there are still promises that have not yet been fulfilled. We too as the beloved of God has inherited great and precious promises and we should therefore offer prayers of thanksgiving to the source of our blessings.

As the previous Lesson indicated God insisted and emphasized that His presence did not depend on a grand Temple building. The important thing was that God be present with His people.

But throughout all of this slippage it is important to note that God is present with God's people and He hears prayers and will respond with mercy. God does not change and His faithfulness to His covenant with us does not change despite the things which come from our sin nature, our hypocrisy, and our dangerous behaviour. But there are consequences.

“The Israelites regarded the Ark as the throne of Yahweh. It was the place where He manifested His presence in a localized way and where He received the blood that atoned for the Israelites’ sins on the Day of Atonement. The ark had rested in David’s tabernacle in Zion since David had brought it from the house of Obed-Edom (2 Samuel 6:17). It was the only item in the Temple that was not new. Perhaps God did not change it to help the people realize that He, symbolized by the ark had not changed. His person and methods of dealing with them at the mercy seat were the same as they had been”.

The Ark of the Covenant of God is in our hearts. The Holy Spirit dwells within us. Our responsibility for gratitude and thanksgiving is therefore even more than that due from the old nation of Israel. But they do had a great responsibility as they look forward to the coming of Messiah.

THE TEXT

The context in which this speech was given is therefore critically important. So we should look carefully at the preceding verses in the Chapter. Close examination of the first chapters which precede our Study Chapter indicates that this massive preparation and building project took about seven years. The first verse opens, informing us that the Ark is being moved from the tents where it had dwelled to the new Temple. The Temple was ready for occupancy by the Ark of the Covenant.

Verse 14. This was a solemn observance in the transition of the place of the Ark.

All the men of Israel, that is the heads of the tribes and families mentioned in 1 Kings 8:1 assembled together to the king. The people were all there cramming every space at this public and formal inauguration of this place of worship.

After the grand procession proceeding along the way with a slow march for priests were stationed along the way to offer an incredibly large number of sacrifices at various spots along the road where the procession must go Solomon stood out to speak the speech of Dedication after the Ark and the old tabernacle with the sacred vessels had been placed in their proper place and the glory of God filled the Temple. The great number of the priests and Levites, and a great throng of rulers and the King and his Court dressed in their finery standing before the glistening Temple with its covering of fine gold, silver, and bronze. The singers of the families of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, arrayed in fine linen, with their musical instruments in their hands, stood at the east end of the altar of burnt offering, and one hundred and twenty priests, blowing their trumpets, had praised the Lord together with one sound, declaring His goodness and His mercy, which endure for ever.

Solomon extols this marvellous proof of the favour of the Lord when he saw that the Temple was filled with a cloud. He remembered the promise that there would be an eternal and gracious connection between God and Israel, which was embodied in the dwelling of God in the Temple.

Solomon had spoken the words recorded in verses 12 through 13 with his face turned to the Temple explaining to comfort the people who had now seen firsthand the powerful and probably frightening demonstration of God's glory how God regarded this Temple and His people.

With this in mind Solomon's first task was now to turn his face from looking at the Temple and watching the movement of the glorious cloud of God which was an approval of the relationship of God with the people, and while the people were displaying a complete attitude of devotion and in their hearts fervently expressing praise to God for the fulfillment of His promise to them turned to the body of the congregation and blessed the entire assembly of Israel.

The entire assembly stood displaying reverence to God and showing their readiness to receive the blessing of the king and blessing of God.

We might not think that blessing is important but let us note the following statement from one scholar: **“Blessings are powerful and important in the lives of others. This was true before Christ and remains true today. The Bible tells us *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16).*”**

There are 86 instances of blessings rendered in the Bible. God in every case is said to be the source of blessing and He often says that He will bless. Leaders and those appointed by God are instructed to bless all the people of God whether they be high or low. Genesis 14:19 spoke of the noted and very important blessing of Abram by Melchizedek, **“And he blessed him and said, *Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor and Maker of heaven and earth*”.**

Note the text following about who will also bless the people of God. Genesis 18:18. **“After all, Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations on the Earth will pronounce blessings on one another using his name”.**

One writer reminds us that it is very important that parents bless their children, both their sons and their daughters;
“The book of Genesis emphasizes the blessings of a father to his sons. The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all gave formal blessings to their children-- and, in Jacob's case, to some

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grandchildren. Receiving a blessing from one's father was a high honor, and losing a blessing was tantamount to a curse.

Blessing therefore has a grand history teaching us a great deal about God and how He behaves and how the people of God therefore behave.

We are reminded of Moses' prayer of blessing over the Israelites. We find this in Numbers 6:24-26 and it reads as follows:

“May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you His favor and give you His peace”.

The book of Ephesians 3:16-20 tells us that we should not ignore this matter of praying for great blessings on others for spiritual growth and it shows us the blessing of the Apostle in one translation of the text:

“I pray that from His glorious, unlimited resources He will empower you with inner strength through His Spirit. Then Christ will make His home in your hearts as you trust in Him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep His love is. May you experience the love of Christ though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. Now all glory to God, who is able, through His mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think”.

Remember though that blessing can be quite simple and should likely focus on God being present in the life of the people around us and for the beautiful attributes of God's character to be shown in their lives.

We should also remember the old tradition that when a young man wants to marry someone's daughter they asked the girl's father for a blessing. This act of blessing has divine approval. We also have the practice of saying a blessing before our meals. We also on many occasions have a long blessing thanking God for His wonderful favour.

Verse 15. Solomon declared a blessing upon the LORD God of Israel who had made great promises to his father David, telling him directly that the building of the Temple would be undertaken and finished. This therefore was done according to the word of Yahweh and according to the will of Yahweh. It was the hand of God that led to the finishing of the Temple building.

Verse 16. Solomon again pointed out that Israel after they had left Egypt, had wandered about before they came to possess the Promised Land. God had never chosen any city from those that the people of Israel inhabited and given instructions that they should build a temple or place of permanence so that His name would be there. The habitation of God was always movable and in a tent.

But in fact the only choice that God had made was to install David over His people to be their leader and king.

Verse 17. After God had chosen David and protected David, giving him rest from his enemies, it had entered into the heart of his father David to establish a temple dedicated to the name of the LORD God of Israel.

Verse 18. God had complimented David for his thoughts to build a temple dedicated to His name, and He considered this thought in his heart a praiseworthy thing.

Verse 19. But notwithstanding his great leadership and work on behalf of the Lord it was commanded him not to build the Temple. Instead one of his sons from his own body would build the Temple dedicated to the name of God.

Verse 20. The command of the Lord has been obeyed and his son Solomon has assumed the throne of Israel after his father, and sat on the throne of Israel. He therefore had fulfilled the desire of his father and the command of God and built the Temple. The promise of God to David had been fulfilled.

Verse 21. The plan forbidden to his father was now given to him to complete and therefore he had been specially commissioned and empowered to build this temple.

The place for the Ark of God, the Ark of the Covenant which symbolized the covenant made with the fathers was now put in his rightful place appointed by God.

Clearly, the pledge of the divine and gracious presence had come and filled the Temple. The LORD God would now from then dwell in the house built for Him.

CONCLUSION

This lesson is therefore about principles to be faithfully observed. Solomon reflects those in his speech.

Now that the Messiah has come, had lived, died for our sins: had been resurrected and ascended to Heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father we must understand and behave as if we know that the covenant of God is now with us. The Holy Spirit of God now dwells in the heart of every believer.

Remember therefore that the source of your blessing is the Lord God of Israel. He is to be treated with utmost love, worship, respect, and reverence. You are to come into His courts with praise and thanksgiving.

The Study therefore is of critical importance. There must be a place for the Holy Spirit of God to be in your heart. He is in fact to overwhelm you for His job is to transform you and guide you into the unbelievably rich blessings of the Almighty God.

This is a most important matter. It was important in the time of the Old Testament before the coming of Messiah and it is even more important today, especially as we approach the time of the end. So Psalm 84 encourages us:

***“Blessed is the man whose strength is in You
Whose heart is set on pilgrimage.
As they pass through the Valley of Baca,
They make it a spring;
The rain also covers it with pools.***

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*They go from strength to strength,
Each one appears before God in Zion.*