

# THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE; SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION: A PICTURE OF THE TEMPLE AS THE "HOUSE OF PRAYER" 1 KINGS 08:22–30

## ***Introduction***

Hardships and misfortunes, difficulties and problems, trials and tribulations, disasters and catastrophes, temptations and seductions, enticements and sinful passions — some of these events confront every one of us as we walk throughout life. When we are confronted by any difficult circumstance, there is an answer: prayer. Seeking the face of God for help. For when we seek God, He hears and answers our prayers. If we are genuine — believing and trusting God with our whole heart — God always hears us. He empowers us to walk through any trial or temptation of this life. Prayer — true prayer — is the greatest force upon this earth. It is the basic principle of the universe by which God has chosen to work and move events. His sovereign power takes action when God hears a person praying.

Prayer is the focus of this present Scripture. Solomon is standing on a platform before the assembly of Israel's leaders and many of the citizens. A crowning, memorable event is taking place: the temple is being dedicated to the LORD. Solomon had just delivered his message to the people. Now he is ready to offer up the prayer of dedication, one of the longest and most magnificent intercessory prayers in all of Scripture. This is: *The Dedication of the Temple (Part 2) — Solomon's Prayer of Dedication: A Picture of the Temple As the "House of Prayer"*, 1 Kings 8:22-53.

- I. Solomon's reverent posture: a lesson on reverence before God (v. 22).
- II. Solomon's acknowledgment of the LORD's uniqueness and supremacy: a lesson on God's faithfulness and love (vv. 23-24).
- III. Solomon's ten requests in prayer: a strong lesson on seeking the LORD (vv. 25-53).

## ***I. 1 Kings 08:22 Solomon's Reverent Posture Before God***

There was Solomon's reverent posture in prayer. For the dedication service, Solomon had built a bronze platform seven and one-half feet long, seven and one-half feet wide, and four and one-half feet high (2 Chr 6:13). It was upon this platform that he stood in prayer before the people. Note that he begins this prayer standing, but ends in a kneeling position (vv. 22, 54). Sometime during the prayer, Solomon's heart was so broken before the LORD that he sank to a kneeling position. He fell to his knees in a humble, reverent submission to the LORD (v. 54).

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For now, as he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, he lifted up his hands toward heaven, outstretched in prayer. By stretching out his hands toward heaven, he was symbolizing...

- that he was totally dependent upon the LORD
- that the LORD alone could answer the request he was about to ask in prayer
- that absolutely nothing could be done apart from the LORD
- that he was humbly submitting himself and his people to the LORD

Standing there before the assembly of Israel, Solomon was both the representative and the shepherd of his people before the LORD. This is one of the great prayers of Holy Scripture.

**Thought 1.** When we approach God, we must approach Him in *reverence* and *awe*, for the LORD is the great Creator and Sustainer of the universe. To Him we owe our lives, all we are and have. Every blessing we have ever received — every good and perfect gift of human life — has come from the hands of God (Jas 1:17). To the LORD belong all glory and majesty, dominion and power forever and ever. Amen. Thus when we approach Him, He is due the utmost reverence.

But this is often not the case. God is often approached rudely and even flippantly, with irreverence and disrespect. For example, some people have referred to God as “the man upstairs.” Others look upon God as only a type of *grandfather*, a gray-haired superior who exists to meet our needs and demands. Even some worship services have become little more than social fellowships or clubs with a sermon tacked on the end, a sermon through which the members sit squirming and restless, impatiently waiting for it to end. And for many, prayer has become little more than an inconvenience, a rushed time to make quick requests for family members or for immediate personal needs.

Such irreverence is an *insult* to God. It is *profane* — an unholy, ungodly, sinful approach to God. This is never the way the LORD God of the universe — the Creator and Sovereign Majesty who rules and reigns over all — should be approached. Listen to what the Holy Word of God says about reverence for God:

**Mat 6:9** “*This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.’*”

**Mat 10:28** “*Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*”

**John 2:13-16** *When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money*

*changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!”*

**Lev 19:30** *“You must observe my Sabbaths. I am the LORD your God.”*

**Lev 22:2** *“Tell Aaron and his sons to treat with respect the sacred offerings the Israelites consecrate to me, so they will not profane my holy name. I am the LORD.”*

**Deut 10:12** *And now, O Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

**Deut 28:58** *“.....and do not revere this glorious and awesome name — the LORD your God.”*

**Josh 5:15** *The commander of the LORD’s army replied, “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.*

**Josh 24:14** *“Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness.”*

**Psa 4:4** *In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.*

**Psa 29:2** *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness.*

**Psa 33:8** *Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him.*

**Psa 34:3** *Glorify the LORD with me; let us exult his name together.*

**Psa 57:5** *Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.*

**Psa 89:7** *In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.*

**Psa 107:32** *Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.*

**Eccl 5:1** *Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.*

**Eccl 12:13** *Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind.*

**Isa 8:13** *The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread.*

**Isa 25:1** *O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvellous things, things planned long ago.*

**Isa 57:15** *For this is what the high and lofty One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.”*

**Eze 36:23** *“I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD”, declares the Sovereign LORD, “when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.”*

**Dan 2:20** *And said: “Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.”*

**Hab 2:20** *But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.*

## II. **1 Kings 08:23–24 Solomon’s Acknowledgment of the LORD’s Uniqueness and Supremacy**

There was Solomon’s acknowledgment of the LORD’s *uniqueness* and *supremacy*. Standing there with his hands stretched up toward heaven, Solomon acknowledged that there is no God other than the LORD Himself (Yahweh, Jehovah). There is none other, not in heaven above nor on earth below. Two things aroused Solomon to declare God’s *uniqueness* and *supremacy*:

1. It is God alone who keeps His covenant (promises) and shows unfailing love to those who obey him (v. 23). God is faithful. When He makes a promise, He keeps His promise. But note: His promises are conditional, given only to those who wholeheartedly obey Him. God’s faithfulness never changes. But it is conditional. A person must obey God and obey Him wholeheartedly to receive God’s promises. If a person is obedient, God’s unfailing love will pour out the richest blessings upon the obedient believer. This is exactly what God’s Holy Word says:

**Exo 34:6-7** *And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.”*

**Deut 7:9-13** *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments. But those who hate him he will repay to their face by destruction; he will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate him. Therefore, take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws I give you today. If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the LORD your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your ancestors. He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the crops of your land — your grain, new wine and olive oil — the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you.*

2. God had kept His promise to David, that he would have a lasting dynasty and that his son Solomon would succeed him and build the temple (2 Sam 7:12-13). In standing

there before the temple with his hands lifted up to God in prayer, Solomon was the proof that God had kept His promise to David. The LORD had set David’s son Solomon on the throne and Solomon had built the temple. The LORD was faithful and His faithfulness was being declared by Solomon.

**Thought 1.** God keeps His Word, doing exactly what He says and promises. His promises are as sure, as certain as the heavens and the earth. As long as heaven and earth exist, God will fulfil His promises to us. Even when heaven and earth pass away and the new heavens and earth are created, God will keep His promises. He is faithful — absolutely faithful — in doing exactly what He says. We can trust God, believe Him, and take Him at His Word. He will never fail to meet every need we have.

**Mat 5:18** *“I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”*

**Luke 21:33** *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”*

**1 Cor 1:9** *God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.*

**Heb 6:17-18** *Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.*

**Deut 7:9** *Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.*

**1 Kng 8:56** *Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.*

**Psa 36:5** *“Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.”*

**Psa 89:1** *“I will sing of the LORD’s great love forever: with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.”*

**Isa 41:10** *“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

**Isa 43:1-2** *“....Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”*

**Isa 46:4** *Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.*

### III. *1 Kings 08:25–30 Solomon’s Requests in Prayer*

There were Solomon’s requests in prayer. Pouring out his heart before God, Solomon became a prayer warrior, interceding for his people. Note that this prayer is one of the longest in Scripture:

1. First, Solomon asked God to keep all His promises (vv. 25-26). In particular, he asked God to keep His promise to establish David’s dynasty forever (2 Sam 7:11-16, esp. 13, 16). He requested God to fulfil His Word, His promises to David. But again note: Solomon recognized that the promise was conditional. In giving the promise to David, the LORD had laid down the condition: only if David’s sons took heed, guarded their walk before God, would the promise be fulfilled. David’s successors must obey God if they were to rule upon the throne of Israel. Of course, David’s descendants are not ruling in Israel today, for they failed to walk faithfully before the LORD. Nevertheless, the promise was fulfilled in the Ideal Son of David, the Messiah and Saviour of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Second, Solomon asked God to watch over His people and to always hear their prayers (vv. 27-30). In a rhetorical, thought provoking question, Solomon actually declared the *true meaning* of the temple. The temple was not built and did not exist to *contain* the presence of God. It was built to *honour* the Name of God. Heaven, even the highest heaven, could not contain the presence of God. How much less could the temple Solomon had built?

Having declared the meaning, Solomon cried out with three specific pleas:

- => for God to watch over the temple night and day, the temple where the very Name of God was honoured (v. 29)
- => for God to hear the prayers of His people Israel (v. 30)
- => for God to forgive His people Israel (v. 30) ■