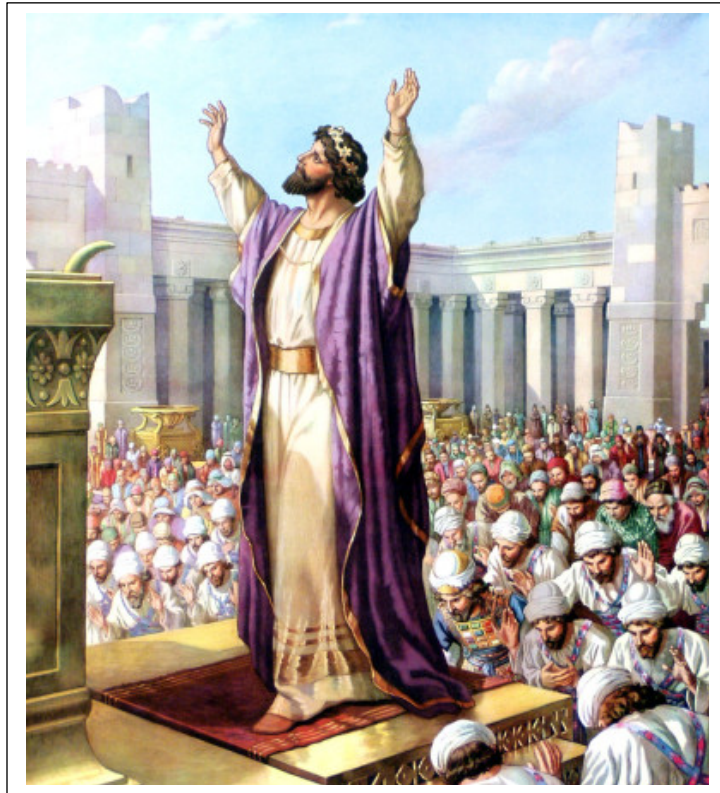


Lesson 44

Temple built and dedicated by king Solomon

1 Kings 6:1-38; 8:1-66



Teacher, please remember that the commentary below is intended to help you in your study, not to be read to your students. Make your own list of applications, using the help from the commentary, but don't necessarily try to cover everything! Think of the students in your class, then be prayerfully selective.

Contents:

1. Preparation
2. Memory verses
3. Theme
4. Lesson introduction
5. Verse by verse commentary (suggested location of activities included)
6. Suggested prayer to close
7. Attention grabbers
8. Activities
9. Bible Text (in full, without commentary)

1. Preparation

- 1) Choose memory verse
- 2) Select attention grabber to start off lesson / break the ice - optional, recommended for younger classes. (see point 7)
- 3) Suggested activities- optional, recommended for younger children (see point 8)

2. Memory verse

1 Corinthians 3:16 "Do you not know you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" NKJV

3. Theme

"We are the temple of the Holy Spirit."

4. Lesson introduction

King David loved God passionately and desired to build a temple for God. He felt like God should dwell in a beautiful house rather than a tent (the tabernacle). But, as we studied in a previous lesson, God told David, "no" (see 2 Samuel 7). Instead, God promised David that his son would build a house for Him. Remember, in Old Testament times, God first dwelt with His people in the tabernacle. Later, He dwelt with His people in the temple Solomon built. Where does God dwell today? In the New Testament, we are told that He dwells in very different temples. In 1 Corinthians 3:16, we read, "Do you not know you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. His people are the temples in which He now lives—pretty amazing that God would dwell inside of us! As we learn more about the awesome temple God had Solomon build—how beautiful it was and how it glorified God—we will see a picture of God's craftsmanship in our lives as the temple of Holy Spirit. God dwells inside us. Let everything we do and say give glory to God.

The nation of Israel had quite a history of testing God's patience. They would seem to go back and forth, often rebelling against God and then suffering the consequences of God's judgment upon them. But King David was a godly king. He loved God and led the nation of Israel to be faithful to the Lord and walk in His ways. Under king Solomon, the nation experienced a time of blessing and prosperity unlike any other time in their history. He was a good king in the beginning of his reign and led the people of Israel in the ways of God. Another momentous event in the history of Israel under his reign was the dedication of the temple.

5. Verse by Verse Commentary

1 Kings 6:1

King Solomon began his reign as a good king. He led the people of Israel in the ways of God. Because the people were being obedient, the Israelites were going through a period of peace and prosperity. Times were good. God was richly blessing them.

Solomon himself was very wealthy; and because he had a good relationship with the countries around Israel, he was able to purchase materials that would make the temple a very beautiful place to honor and worship God.

It was in the spring of the fourth year of Solomon's reign that he began to build the temple. This was 480 years after the people left their slavery in Egypt. During this time, the nation of Israel worshipped God in the tabernacle, the tent of meeting. This was a portable structure set up to house the Ark of the Covenant as well as to perform the sacrifices and ceremonies.

Now, the time had finally come to build a permanent structure that would bring glory to God among all of the nations. This desire was born in David's heart and fulfilled in Solomon's life. David had a big dream—to build a house for God to dwell in. Do you have big dreams for how you want to serve God? As we endeavor to serve the Lord with our whole hearts, God can do big things through our lives. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Kings 6:2-6

The main part of the temple was ninety feet long, thirty feet wide, and forty-five feet high. It had a large porch, the full width of the building, with narrow windows throughout. When you think about it, the temple was not a very large building.

NOTE TO TEACHER: Perhaps you could compare these measurements to a building or something else your children can relate to in order to give them an idea of size.

On both sides of the temple, small rooms were built against the outer walls. These rooms were three stories high. The lower floor was 7 1/2 feet wide. There were ledges around the building so that the beams would not be built into the temple walls.

1 Kings 6:7-8

The blocks used in the construction were pre-finished at the rock quarry so that no building noise was heard at the sight of the temple. The bottom floor of the side rooms was entered from the right side of the temple. There was a winding flight of stairs from the second to the third level.

It would appear that there was a certain reverence that was kept during the building of the temple. The workers respected the things of the Lord and wanted to do an excellent job, using only the best materials. It is an example of how we need to be careful to respect the things of the Lord.

Since as Christians, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit, our actions should show reverence and respect for the God we serve. We show reverence and respect as we worship and spend time with the Lord in prayer and study of His Word. We show reverence and respect as we serve Him with our whole heart, our full devotion, desiring to please Him in all we do. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Kings 6:9-10

After completing the temple, Solomon paneled it all with cedar. The annex of rooms was connected to the temple with cedar beams. Each story of the annex was 7 1/2 feet high.

1 Kings 6:11-13

Then the Lord sent a message to Solomon about the temple. In paraphrase the Lord said, "If you do what I tell you and follow all of my commandments and instructions, I will live among the people of Israel and will never forsake them, just as I promised your father, David."

God promises us a blessed life as we walk in His ways. He promises us He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Just as God's presence would dwell in the temple, the Holy Spirit has come inside our hearts to dwell. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Suggested Activity- I Am the Temple of the Spirit!

1 Kings 6:14-18

At last the temple was finished. The entire inside, from floor to ceiling, was paneled with cedar and the floors were made of cypress wood. At the far end of the building was a 30-foot inner room which was called the Most Holy Place. It also was paneled from floor to ceiling with cedar. The rest of the temple was 60 feet long. Throughout the temple, the cedar paneling laid over the stone walls and was carved with designs of rosebuds and open flowers.

Note, the workers took much time and diligent effort to cut the stones that would be covered by the wood just right; even the foundation stones were cut just right. God is not only interested in those things that are visible. He also wants those things that are hidden away (invisible) to be done well.

Remember, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. When no one sees your service to the Lord, is it still done with a whole heart, with a fervent desire to please Him? We should desire to do what is pleasing to Him all of the time. In Colossians 3:23 we read, "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men..."

1 Kings 6:19-22

The inner room at the far end, the Most Holy Place, was where the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord was placed. This inner sanctuary was thirty feet wide by thirty feet long and thirty feet high. Its walls and ceiling were overlaid with pure gold. Solomon built a cedar altar for this room and covered it with pure gold. Then he covered the rest of the temple with pure gold. He made gold chains to protect the entrance to the Most Holy Place.

Even as beautiful as that room must have been, its real beauty came from the Lord's presence. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Our real beauty is the presence of the Lord dwelling within.

1 Kings 6:23-28

In the inner sanctuary, he built two identical cherubim, or angels from olive wood. They were fifteen feet long and fifteen feet high. They were placed so that their wings spread out from wall to wall with their inner wings touching each other in the center of the room. They were both covered with gold.

Imagine how wonderful that must have looked. The priest would only come into this room one day per year on the Day of Atonement when he would sprinkle blood on the altar for the forgiveness of the people's sins. Again, we see God's attention to detail, even though the inner sanctuary would not often be seen.

The work God does deep inside our hearts may not be visible to man. God may want to correct a wrong attitude or teach us to rely on Him more. Perhaps, our service to Lord will be visible to Him alone. That's okay. God knows the kind of temple He wants to fill up with His presence, and He is doing His work in our hearts to make us that temple. Let us trust Him to do a work of art within His temple.

1 Kings 6:29-30

Figures of angels, palm trees and open flowers were carved on all the walls of both rooms and were covered with gold. He even covered the floor with gold. No expense was spared in order to make the most beautiful place possible for the Lord's glory.

1 Kings 6:31-35

The doorway to the inner sanctuary was made from olive wood. He then made square door-posts of olive wood for the entrance to the Temple. There were two folding doors of cypress wood and each door was hinged to fold back upon itself. All the doors were carved with angels, palm trees, open flowers and were covered with hammered gold.

Notice all of the detail that was taken to build the temple. Sometimes, we may read this list real fast and not stop to consider what this may have been like. There was an incredible amount of detail taken to carve the palm trees, the flowers, and the angels. The workers with the gold used the greatest amount of detail possible to make beautiful works. It must have taken a great deal of time. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit. God is concerned about the details of our lives.

1 Kings 6:36-38

The wall of the inner courtyard had three layers of hewn stone and one layer of cedar beams. The foundation was started in the month of May in the fourth year of Solomon's reign. The entire building was completed in November of the eleventh year. It took seven years to complete from beginning to end.

Solomon's temple was built with the best and the most expensive materials available. No cost was spared. The gold covering made the temple a place of wonderful beauty. It shined to represent the glory of God.

The Bible says our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit of God. Nothing has been spared to redeem us, not even the life of His precious Son, Jesus which is more valuable than all the gold covering the temple walls. His blood cleansed and removed our sins so that our lives can become a life of beauty to glorify God.

Solomon, in love and obedience, built the temple. In turn, God promised His blessings upon the Israelites: If they would obey His commands and follow Him, He would live among them and never leave them.

God desires to bless us. If we ask Jesus into our hearts and determine to obey God, He will make something beautiful out of our lives. He promises He will never leave us. Remember, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. May our lives be wholly dedicated to His service!

Suggested Activity: Cracker Temple

1 Kings 8:1-11

Remember, it was first in the heart of King David to build a permanent dwelling for the ark of the covenant. Though he collected materials, God chose King Solomon to complete the task. God provided materials and gifted laborers for the construction project. It took a little over seven years to complete the temple, but when it was done the temple was one of Israel's most beautiful and awesome buildings, a place where all the people of Israel could gather to worship.

Everyone in Israel was invited to celebrate and witness this wonderful event—the dedication of the temple to the Lord. The whole nation gathered to watch the ark of God make its way in a great parade as the priests carried the ark with poles to be placed in the Holy of Holies within the temple. The temple courtyard buzzed with busy priests sacrificing more animals than could be counted as the people joyfully worshipped the Lord.

The Lord filled the Holy of Holies with a beautiful manifestation of His glory, giving approval of their expression of worship, just as He did with Moses, when the tabernacle was dedicated (Exodus 40:34- 35). Wow! What an experience. The presence of the holy and living God was with the nation of Israel. They knew that God desired to dwell with His people. What an indescribable blessing it must have been to those present—King Solomon and the children of Israel—as they celebrate their relationship with the living God.

The Lord dwells in different temples, today--He dwells inside of our hearts. We, as God's temple, can be filled with the glory of His presence. When we ask Him to come into our lives, He will, just as He promised. We no longer have to sacrifice animals as a covering for our sin. We are now forgiven because of the work Jesus did on the cross. How blessed we are as we enjoy sweet communion with our Lord and Savior, who said, "He will never leave us nor forsake us" (Deuteronomy 31:6; Hebrews 13:5). He is faithful to continue His work in our lives and will finish it when we meet Him face to face (Philippians 1:6). God always keeps His promises.

1 Kings 8:12-21

This day of celebration was possible because of God's faithfulness to the promise made to King David. Remember, God told David he would not be the one to build the temple. Instead, the task would be left to his son Solomon. So, David made preparations for Solomon to carry out his task (1 Chronicles 22:6-10). God always keeps His promises.

King Solomon and the people of Israel celebrated and worshipped God for His faithfulness. Now the ark of the Lord rests in the place where God will dwell. King Solomon is filled with humility and thankfulness as he expresses the faithfulness of God to not only his father, but to all the people of Israel, the people He delivered from the bondage of Egypt.

What do we have to be thankful for? It is good to look over our lives and remember all that God has done for us. As we gather for church, let it be a time of celebration of His faithfulness! —a time when we express our thankfulness to Him. God always keeps His promises.

1 Kings 8:22-53

King Solomon stood before the altar of God before all the assembly of Israel, then kneeling down with his hands spread toward heaven prayed to the Lord, dedicating the temple. He began his prayer with worship and praise to God for His awesome character and his faithfulness in keeping His promises. Then King Solomon began to petition God and to intercede for His people. He knew that their greatest need would be for God to hear their prayers in times of trouble and sin. In his prayer, we can see nine requests of Solomon.

1) GOD'S PRESENCE AND PROTECTION (verses 25-30). King Solomon called on God to continue to be faithful to His promises to David and to continue to hear the prayers of His people.

2) GOD'S FORGIVENESS OF SINS (verses 31-32). King Solomon asked God to judge the wicked and help the righteous when the people have disputes.

3) GOD'S FORGIVENESS OF SINS THAT HAD CAUSED DEFEAT IN BATTLE (verses 33- 34). King Solomon asked the Lord to forgive His people when they confessed their sins that caused defeat when they were in combat.

4)GOD'S FORGIVENESS OF SINS THAT HAD BROUGHT ON DROUGHT IN THE LAND (verses 35-36). King Solomon also asked God to forgive His people if they confessed their sins that resulted in rain being withheld.

5) GOD'S FORGIVENESS OF SINS WHICH RESULTED IN CALAMITIES (verses 37-40). King Solomon asked God to forgive those who sinned and brought about such calamities such as famine, mildew, insects, enemies, disaster or disease, which God used to chasten His sinning people.

6) MERCY FOR GOD-FEARING PEOPLE WHO ARE FOREIGNERS (verses 41-43). King Solomon prays for the foreigners who would trust in God, that He would hear them so others in the world would know the Lord.

7) TO HAVE VICTORY IN BATTLE (verses 44-45). King Solomon asked God to uphold and bless Israel when they are in battle.

8)TO BE RESTORED AFTER CAPTIVITY (verses 46-51). King Solomon seemed to have prophetic insight into the fate of Israel. They would go into captivity because of their sins, but when they repented God is faithful to restore His people to their land.

9) THAT GOD WOULD GIVE ATTENTION TO EVERY PRAYER (verses 52-53). King Solomon summarizes his prayer by calling on God to hear His people whenever they cry out in prayer.

Throughout the prayer, King 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. Solomon knew that he could depend on God for His mercy and blessings. Confession and forsaking of sin would result in God's hearing His people's prayers and forgiving their sin. God always keeps His promises.

What a privilege it is pray! —to know we will be heard, not because of our own righteousness, but because of the righteousness given to us through faith in Jesus Christ who took the punishment for our sins. God invites us to call upon Him in time of trouble. He will help us with our struggles and strengthen us when we are weak. If we sin, we can confess our sins and find He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8,9). God always keeps His promises

Suggested Activity: Instruments of Praise

1 Kings 8:54-61

King Solomon now turns to bless the people and then prays for them. What a beautiful thing it is to be in the center of God's will; living in obedience and receiving the glorious blessings of the Lord. God raised Israel up to be a great nation. This period of time in which they experienced the blessings God promised to those who would follow the Lord wholly would never be matched again.

As we examine King Solomon's prayer, we see five things that we, too, can pray.

- 1) For God's presence in our life (verse 57).
- 2) For the desire to do God's will in everything (verse 58).
- 3) For His help in our daily needs (verse 59).
- 4) For a desire to live good and perfect lives (verse 61).
- 5) For the ability to obey God's Word (verse 61).

King Solomon gathered the people not just to dedicate the temple, but to rededicate themselves to God's service. Each person was to examine his or her own commitment to the Lord. A time will come in the history of Israel when they will go against the prayer of King Solomon. Thinking that a blessed life can happen on their own terms, they will begin to rebel against God's ways and get themselves into all kinds of trouble.

As Christians, we must examine our hearts. A life of rebellion to God and His ways ultimately leads to a life of despair. It is God's desire to bless us. May our hearts be wholly devoted to the Lord. May we walk in his ways.

1 Kings 8:62-66

This dedication took place at the beginning of the festival of Tabernacles, which normally lasted one week but was extended to two weeks on this special occasion. The Feast of Tabernacles commemorated Israel's years of wandering in the wilderness (Leviticus 23:33, 41-43).

The people returned home at the end of the celebration joyful and glad of heart (verse 66). They were filled with joy and thankfulness to God for His goodness to them. God's promises had been fulfilled in their life. How blessed they were!

It is no secret that the promises of God are woven all through the Bible. May all of us, who long for a blessed life, walk in His ways. God will be true to His Word. He will be faithful to complete and accomplish all that He wants to do in our lives, if we will only let Him. God always keeps His promises.

Suggested Activity: A Day of Celebration

6. Prayer

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to remember that they are the temple of the Holy Spirit (if they have received Jesus). May they live a life that glorifies the Lord. Thank the Lord as well for His faithfulness to keep all of His promises. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

7. Attention Grabbers

What you will need:

- 1) A large sheet of butcher paper, red construction paper, scissors, glue and markers.

2) Masking tape and two balloons.

Carrying out the attention grabber:

1) Temple “Brick” Banner:

The object of this activity is to make a large banner with bricks to represent each child in your class. Have someone in your class (or you can) look up Ephesians 2:19-22. Explain to the class that we will be learning about the time when Solomon built the temple and how that each one of us is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

To help us to see how that we are each a part of “God’s building,” we will make a banner with several bricks. You will need a large piece of butcher paper. Using half-sheets (cut width-wise) of red construction paper make enough bricks for each child in the class. Have the children decorate each brick. Instruct the children to leave enough space for a name to be written on the “brick.”

Next, have the children pair up. Instruct the children to write down the name of their partner (the teacher and aide will need to assist the younger children). Instruct the children to find one good thing about their partner to write down on their brick. Then, glue the brick onto the banner. See if you have enough bricks to build a building or temple. Your class can also draw on the banner to enhance the picture. On the top of the banner, write: “We are the temple of the Holy Spirit.”

2) Hop to the Temple:

The entire nation of Israel was invited to the temple dedication. For a fun game to help the children get their “wiggles” out, let’s play Hop to the Temple. Have children form two teams. With masking tape, make a starting line. Blow up two balloons and explain to the children that they will need to keep the balloon between their knees and hop to the “temple” (the other end of the room) and back. You can possibly draw a “temple” on the chalk/dry erase board and have that as the side of the room that they will hop towards.

Make sure that the teams are evenly distributed; have the first child go a second time if the teams are not even. See which team can get to the temple and back first. Reward that team with the privilege of serving the snack later to the whole class during the Day of Celebration feast.

8. Activities:

What you will need:

1) As many copies of the “I am the Temple of the Spirit” templates as the number of children in your class, various colors of construction paper, brads or paper fasteners, glue stick and markers.

2) Graham crackers, ready-made frosting, craft sticks, paper plates, and paper towels

3) Option 1 - Two small paper plates for each child, streamers or ribbon, dry beans, markers, a stapler and glue.

Option 2 - One pipe cleaner and 5 - 6 small bells for each child, streamers or ribbon.

4) A healthy snack for the children’s “Day of Celebration feast.”

How to carry out the activities:

1) I Am the Temple of the Spirit!

Use the enclosed template; make one copy for each child in your class. You will need various colors of construction paper for the heart, arms and legs, brads or paper fasteners, glue stick and markers. Have the children cut out the heart, arms, and legs. Next, have them write the phrase, "I am the temple of the Holy Spirit" on to their heart (for younger children, you may need to help them). Next, have them write their names onto the heart. They can color or decorate the heart, arms and legs. Glue the arms and legs to construction paper to make the craft stronger. Attach the arms and legs to the heart with brads. Reinforce the theme of today's lesson by reminding the children that we are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

2) Cracker Temple

This is a craft and a snack all in one! You will need graham crackers or saltine crackers, ready-made frosting, craft sticks, paper plates and paper towels. Give each child two full graham crackers (can substitute 8 saltine crackers). Break the crackers into 8 quarter pieces. Dip one edge of the cracker into the frosting. Stick the edge of a second cracker to the frosted edge of the first cracker so that the children can begin to make a small house. Allow the children to use their imaginations as they build their "cracker house." As the children build their house ask them about the house that Solomon built for the Lord in our story. Ask the children where the Holy Spirit lives today (in our hearts).

3) Instruments of Praise

When the temple was dedicated, it was a very exciting time. King Solomon and all of the people praised and worshipped the Lord. In this craft we will make our own instruments of praise to worship the Lord. You will have two instruments to choose from. The first will require two small paper plates for each child, streamers or ribbon, dry beans, markers, a stapler and glue. On the edge of one paper plate (facing up), glue some ribbon or streamers onto it. Next, put some dry beans onto the plate. Place the second paper plate over the first (the plates will be facing each other so that no beans can escape). Staple the plates together. Decorate the outside of your instrument by writing the theme or memory verse and decorating it. Set your instrument aside for later.

The second option for an instrument is a bracelet with bells. You will need a pipe cleaner, 5 to 6 small bells and some streamers or ribbon. String the bells onto the pipe cleaner. Measure the pipe cleaner to the child's wrist. Tie into a circle. Cut away any excess pipe cleaner. Tie onto the pipe cleaner some ribbon or streamers to decorate the bracelet. Set the instrument aside for later.

4) A Day of Celebration

For Solomon and the people of Israel, the day that the temple was dedicated was a day of great celebration. We are blessed to celebrate the Lord's presence in our lives through the Holy Spirit every day. Today, we are going to have a special time of celebration. Prepare a simple "feast" to celebrate God's goodness and His faithfulness to all of His promises.

Have all of the children gather into a circle. Have napkins available for all of the children. Bring some small, simple snacks (raisins, carrots, fruit slices or popcorn). Allow the children who won the “Hop to the Temple” game to serve the other children in the circle.

After serving the snack, pray with the children, thanking the Lord for all of His goodness. Next, allow each child to share ways that they are thankful to the Lord. After snack lead the children in a praise song and allow them to use their instruments to make a “joyful noise” unto the Lord.

9. Bible text (NIV):

1 Kings 6:1-38

Solomon Builds the Temple

1 In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites came out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the Lord.

2 The temple that King Solomon built for the Lord was sixty cubits long, twenty wide and thirty high. 3 The portico at the front of the main hall of the temple extended the width of the temple, that is twenty cubits, and projected ten cubits from the front of the temple. 4 He made narrow windows high up in the temple walls. 5 Against the walls of the main hall and inner sanctuary he built a structure around the building, in which there were side rooms. 6 The lowest floor was five cubits wide, the middle floor six cubits and the third floor seven.

+ He made offset ledges around the outside of the temple so that nothing would be inserted into the temple walls.

7 In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built.

8 The entrance to the lowest[h] floor was on the south side of the temple; a stairway led up to the middle level and from there to the third. 9 So he built the temple and completed it, roofing it with beams and cedar planks. 10 And he built the side rooms all along the temple. The height of each was five cubits, and they were attached to the temple by beams of cedar.

11 The word of the Lord came to Solomon: 12 “As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, observe my laws and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. 13 And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel.”

14 So Solomon built the temple and completed it. 15 He lined its interior walls with cedar boards, paneling them from the floor of the temple to the ceiling, and covered the floor of the temple with planks of juniper. 16 He partitioned off twenty cubits at the rear of the temple with cedar boards from floor to ceiling to form within the temple an inner sanctuary, the Most Holy Place. 17 The main hall in front of this room was forty cubits[i] long. 18 The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with gourds and open flowers. Everything was cedar; no stone was to be seen.

19 He prepared the inner sanctuary within the temple to set the ark of the covenant of the Lord there.

20 The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty wide and twenty high. He overlaid the inside with pure gold, and he also overlaid the altar of cedar. 21 Solomon covered the inside of the temple with pure gold, and he extended gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, which was overlaid with gold.

22 So he overlaid the whole interior with gold. He also overlaid with gold the altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary.

23 For the inner sanctuary he made a pair of cherubim out of olive wood, each ten cubits high. 24 One wing of the first cherub was five cubits long, and the other wing five cubits—ten cubits from wing tip to wing tip. 25 The second cherub also measured ten cubits, for the two cherubim were identical in size and shape. 26 The height of each cherub was ten cubits. 27 He placed the cherubim inside the innermost room of the temple, with their wings spread out. The wing of one cherub touched one wall, while the wing of the other touched the other wall, and their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. 28 He overlaid the cherubim with gold. 29 On the walls all around the temple, in both the inner and outer rooms, he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers. 30 He also covered the floors of both the inner and outer rooms of the temple with gold. 31 For the entrance to the inner sanctuary he made doors out of olive wood that were one fifth of the width of the sanctuary. 32 And on the two olive-wood doors he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid the cherubim and palm trees with hammered gold. 33 In the same way, for the entrance to the main hall he made doorframes out of olive wood that were one fourth of the width of the hall. 34 He also made two doors out of juniper wood, each having two leaves that turned in sockets. 35 He carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers on them and overlaid them with gold hammered evenly over the carvings. 36 And he built the inner courtyard of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams. 37 The foundation of the temple of the Lord was laid in the fourth year, in the month of Ziv. 38 In the eleventh year in the month of Bul, the eighth month, the temple was finished in all its details according to its specifications. He had spent seven years building it.

1 Kings 8:1-66

The Ark Brought to the Temple

1 Then King Solomon summoned into his presence at Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the Lord's covenant from Zion, the City of David. 2 All the Israelites came together to King Solomon at the time of the festival in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month. 3 When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the priests took up the ark, 4 and they brought up the ark of the Lord and the tent of meeting and all the sacred furnishings in it. The priests and Levites carried them up, 5 and King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel that had gathered about him were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be recorded or counted. 6 The priests then brought the ark of the Lord's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. 7 The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark and overshadowed the ark and its carrying poles. 8 These poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside the Holy Place; and they are still there today. 9 There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt. 10 When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the Lord. 11 And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled his temple. 12 Then Solomon said, "The Lord has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; 13 I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever."

14 While the whole assembly of Israel was standing there, the king turned around and blessed them. 15 Then he said: “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who with his own hand has fulfilled what he promised with his own mouth to my father David. For he said, 16 ‘Since the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city in any tribe of Israel to have a temple built so that my Name might be there, but I have chosen David to rule my people Israel.’

17 “My father David had it in his heart to build a temple for the Name of the Lord, the God of Israel. 18 But the Lord said to my father David, ‘You did well to have it in your heart to build a temple for my Name. 19 Nevertheless, you are not the one to build the temple, but your son, your own flesh and blood—he is the one who will build the temple for my Name.’

20 “The Lord has kept the promise he made: I have succeeded David my father and now I sit on the throne of Israel, just as the Lord promised, and I have built the temple for the Name of the Lord, the God of Israel. 21 I have provided a place there for the ark, in which is the covenant of the Lord that he made with our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt.”

Solomon’s Prayer of Dedication

22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven 23 and said: “Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. 24 You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.

25 “Now Lord, the God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, ‘You shall never fail to have a successor to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your descendants are careful in all they do to walk before me faithfully as you have done.’ 26 And now, God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.

27 “But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! 28 Yet give attention to your servant’s prayer and his plea for mercy, Lord my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. 29 May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, ‘My Name shall be there,’ so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. 30 Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

31 “When anyone wrongs their neighbor and is required to take an oath and they come and swear the oath before your altar in this temple, 32 then hear from heaven and act. Judge between your servants, condemning the guilty by bringing down on their heads what they have done, and vindicating the innocent by treating them in accordance with their innocence.

33 “When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you, and when they turn back to you and give praise to your name, praying and making supplication to you in this temple, 34 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them back to the land you gave to their ancestors.

35 “When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and give praise to your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, 36 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.

37 “When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come, 38 and when a prayer or plea is made by anyone among your people Israel—being aware of the afflictions of their own

hearts and spreading out their hands toward this temple— 39 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with everyone according to all they do, since you know their hearts (for you alone know every human heart), 40 so that they will fear you all the time they live in the land you gave our ancestors.

41 “As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your name— 42 for they will hear of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when they come and pray toward this temple, 43 then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.

44 “When your people go to war against their enemies, wherever you send them, and when they pray to the Lord toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name, 45 then hear from heaven their prayer and their plea and uphold their cause.

46 “When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to their enemies, who take them captive to their own lands, far away or near; 47 and if they have a change of heart in the land where they are held captive, and repent and plead with you in the land of their captors and say, ‘We have sinned, we have done wrong, we have acted wickedly’; 48 and if they turn back to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies who took them captive, and pray to you toward the land you gave their ancestors, toward the city you have chosen and the temple I have built for your Name; 49 then from heaven, your dwelling place, hear their prayer and their plea, and uphold their cause. 50 And forgive your people, who have sinned against you; forgive all the offenses they have committed against you and cause their captors to show them mercy; 51 for they are your people and your inheritance, whom you brought out of Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace. 52 “May your eyes be open to your servant’s plea and to the plea of your people Israel, and may you listen to them whenever they cry out to you. 53 For you singled them out from all the nations of the world to be your own inheritance, just as you declared through your servant Moses when you, Sovereign Lord, brought our ancestors out of Egypt.”

54 When Solomon had finished all these prayers and supplications to the Lord, he rose from before the altar of the Lord, where he had been kneeling with his hands spread out toward heaven. 55 He stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel in a loud voice, saying:

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. 57 May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our ancestors; may he never leave us nor forsake us. 58 May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands, decrees and laws he gave our ancestors. 59 And may these words of mine, which I have prayed before the Lord, be near to the Lord our God day and night, that he may uphold the cause of his servant and the cause of his people Israel according to each day’s need, 60 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is no other. 61 And may your hearts be fully committed to the Lord our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time.”

The Dedication of the Temple

62 Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the Lord. 63 Solomon offered a sacrifice of fellowship offerings to the Lord: twenty-two thousand cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats. So the king and all the Israelites dedicated the temple of the Lord.

64 On that same day the king consecrated the middle part of the courtyard in front of the temple of the Lord, and there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings,

because the bronze altar that stood before the Lord was too small to hold the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings.

65 So Solomon observed the festival at that time, and all Israel with him—a vast assembly, people from Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt. They celebrated it before the Lord our God for seven days and seven days more, fourteen days in all. 66 On the following day he sent the people away. They blessed the king and then went home, joyful and glad in heart for all the good things the Lord had done for his servant David and his people Israel.

