

Greater than Solomon, Greater than the Temple (Lord's Supper 06-06-2021)

As you know, every year I read through my Bible. I've been doing this regularly since coming back from Russia. And this week, in the OT part I have been reading through 1 Kings. This morning, I would like to use a story from the days of Solomon as a springboard for us as we take the Lord's Supper. David died and Solomon has taken his place. God has given him wisdom above any other king. At this time, all Israel is united and there is great peace. They are extremely wealthy as a nation. And the city of Jerusalem is being constructed into the great center of worship. Solomon has built his own house and then he begins and completes the temple in Jerusalem. When they finish, they sacrifice more animals than can be counted. And when they bring the ark of the covenant into the holy of holies, a cloud of glory fills the temple so that no one can enter.

Then, Solomon stands before the people to speak. And he says, "**Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who with his hand has fulfilled what he promised . . .**" (1 Kings 8:15). In fact, as he considers where Israel has come from (Egypt) and where they are now as a peaceful nation in the Land of Canaan, he says, "**Blessed be the Lord who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he has promised.**" And then goes on to clarify, saying, "**Not one word has failed of all his good promise, which he spoke by Moses his servant . . .**" (8:56) And then he goes on to say, "**May God not leave us or forsake us, that he may incline our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his rules, which he commanded our fathers . . .**" And then he continues: "**so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no other**" (8:60).

And during this time off dedicating the Temple, he then considers the sins of the people. In fact he says in 8:46 that "**there is no one who does not sin.**" He pleads for the people not to sin, but he knows they will. And then he says: "**But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built! Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive**" (1 Kings 8:27-30).

He then goes on to mention some of the ways in which Israel WILL sin. V. 31: "**If a man sins against his neighbor and is made to take an oath and comes and swears his oath before your altar in this house, then hear in heaven and act and judge your servants . . .** V. 33: "**When your people Israel are defeated before the enemy because they have sinned against you, and if they turn again to you and acknowledge great name and pray and plead with you in this house, then hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your people . . .**" V. 37: "**If there is famine or pestilence, if their enemy besieges them, whatever plague or sickness . . . when they know the affliction of their heart and then pray toward this place, then hear in heaven and forgive them.**" . . . He was saying, "*God, when your people sin, grant them repentance. May they remember your commands and your promises to save, and by faith look*

*unto You and your temple, restore them.*" Really, this is the promise of 2 Chron. 7:14: "**If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.**"

Today, we do not live in the land of Canaan. Nor do we pray toward Jerusalem. But the principle and the promise remain. And today, we find this truth fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Do you remember Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman from John cp. 4? She said to Jesus, the Jewish man, "**Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.**" . . . And Jesus says, "**Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.**" "**But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.**" Notice he does not do as Solomon did and tell her to look to Jerusalem. No. She says, "*I know the Messiah is coming; when he gets here, he will tell us what do do.*" And then Jesus says, "**I who speak to you am he.**" (John 4:1-26). In another place, in the context of judgment, Jesus says, "**someone greater than Solomon is here.**" And then "**something greater than the temple is here**" (Matt. 12:6: 12:42).

To the religious leader of Jesus' day and to the religious Jew today, this is absurd. To think there is one greater king than Solomon, or a greater temple on the earth than what was in Jerusalem of Solomon's day. But, even in Solomon's prayer, he gives a truth that we must never forget. In 1 Kings 8:27 he says, "**But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built! 28 Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O Lord my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, 29 that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.**" Here, Solomon knows that the temple is something man has built. And this temple cannot HOLD the eternal God. The cloud of God's glory that descended in that day on that temple was WASN'T EVEN A DROP OF HIS GLORY in comparison to ALL the glory that remains upon the Son of God. John said of him, "**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth**" (John 1:14).

Today, as we take the Lord's Supper, we do not look to Solomon, nor do we look to an earthly temple, we look to Jesus Christ. For in Him, ALL the glory of God dwells. "**He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature**" (Heb. 1:3). "**For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell . . .** (Col. 1:19). And the principle of Solomon's prayer remains. By faith and repentance we do not look to temples made with earthly hands, but instead we look to the ONE who ascended from heaven. For in Him, we are seated in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6). How can this be? Well, to answer this, what do we remember in the Lord's Supper? We remember his death. We remember the Son of God, the Son of man, Jesus Christ, the ONE who died. His death was a sacrifice, a sacrifice for our sins. EVERYTHING our sins deserved, Jesus received . . . and this was IN OUR PLACE. God punished the Son. And those

who believe in the Son do not receive deserved punishment, which is separation from God. But instead, those who believe, receive life. One of my favorite songs is called, "*His robes for mine.*" Jesus wears the robe of heaven. It is beautiful and holy; it has no defects. It is not too big, nor too small. It is perfect. And the robe I wear is old and worn out and full of holes and filth. And every day it grows worse. But, when I came to Christ, he took my robe and he exchanged it for his. And now, this is the beautiful robe that God sees. This is the Gospel, the ONE who is greater than Solomon or his Temple.

With that in mind, as we remember Solomon's prayers, we must remember that in those prayers the people are repentant as they look to the Temple. This is why Paul commands us as we take the Lord's Supper, to examine ourselves. So, for the remainder of our time, I want to read our covenant as a way to examine ourselves, as we have agreed here at Grace that these are the ways we will live; these are the ways we will treat one another; these are the ways we will be obedient to the commands of Christ until He returns. And this will give us an occasion to remember our sins, and in repentance and faith look unto Christ.

1 John 1:9-2:2 says: "**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins . . .**"

Read Covenant and Take the Lord's Supper