

January 12 Lesson 7 (NIV)

SOLOMON SPEAKS TO THE PEOPLE

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 132:1–5, 11–18

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 8:14–21; 2 Chronicles 6

1 KINGS 8:14–21

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.”

KEY VERSE

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. —1 Kings 8:15

HONORING GOD

Unit 2: Dedicating the Temple of God

LESSONS 6–9

HOW TO SAY IT

Ammonites *Am-un-ites*.

Edomites *Ee-dum-ites*.

Hiram *High-rum*.

Moabites *Mo-ub-ites*.

Philistines *Fuh-liss-teenz* or *Fill-us-teenz*.

Syrians *Sear-ee-unz*.

Tyre *Tire*.

Introduction

A. Because He Said He Would

When asked to give the eulogy at his father's funeral, a young man named Alex Sheen decided to honor his dad by commemorating him as one who always kept his word. Sheen distributed "promise cards" with the words "because I said I would" written in the corner. He asked people to write promises on the cards and then to hand the cards to those to whom they made the promises. The persons making the promises would get the card back once they had fulfilled their word. Sheen then offered to send free cards to anyone who asked, no matter where they lived.

Word got out. Within 18 months, Sheen had kept *his* promise and sent out more than 250,000 cards. This response led to his establishment of the nonprofit organization "because I said I would." Since 2013, the organization has provided over eight million promise cards.

This week's text focuses on words Solomon spoke at the dedication of the temple. Those words highlighted promises made and kept. Because God said he would, he did.

B. Lesson Context

The faithful God of Israel had established David's son Solomon on the throne of Israel (1 Kings 2:12). God then enabled Solomon to complete the project his father had given him to build a house of worship for the Lord (1 Chronicles 22:6–13). First Kings 8:1–13 (last week's lesson) recounted the opening scenes of the dedication ceremony for the grand temple Solomon had built in Jerusalem for the God of Israel (see lesson 6). Today's account continues to examine that ceremony. A parallel account can be found in 2 Chronicles 6:3–11.

I. Blessings

(1 KINGS 8:14, 15)

A. For the People (v. 14)

14. While the whole assembly of Israel was standing there, the king turned around and blessed them.

Details in this account again recall events from the Israelites' time in the exodus (see lesson 6 regarding previous parallels). For example, when the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle at

Mount Horeb, the people stood in reverence (Exodus 33:10). Similarly here, the glory has filled the temple (1 Kings 8:11, last week's lesson) with the people standing before it. In the instance at hand, *the whole assembly* stands respectfully to hear *the king*, knowing that God is present (8:10–12).

Their standing in this context is a position of prayer. Though today we may think of kneeling as the most devout position, standing is often the preferred posture in ancient Israel (compare Leviticus 9:5; 1 Kings 8:22–61).

The king has been facing the sanctuary on a special bronze platform while the priests were at the altar (2 Chronicles 5:12; 6:13). Unlike the people, it appears that Solomon is kneeling as he speaks (6:13). Kneeling is not necessarily a posture of worship; this posture can be assumed in situations to express one's lowly position before a more powerful or important person. In the context at hand, kneeling conveys respect for the Lord and humility in his presence (1 Kings 8:54; Ezra 9:5; Isaiah 45:23).

In the world of the Bible, the act of blessing expresses one's desire that God's approval and goodwill will rest on a person or group. The content of Solomon's blessing is not recorded here. Later verses offer clues of what Solomon may pray as a blessing for the people (1 Kings 8:29–53, not in today's lesson text). Likely, the blessing the king seeks is for God to hear the people and forgive them when they repent of sins.

Solomon's blessing echoes Moses' blessing of the people following the completion of the tabernacle (Exodus 39:32, 43). The king's blessing of *the whole assembly of Israel* highlights his role as a spiritual leader among the people as well as his identity as the nation's civic leader (compare Deuteronomy 17:14–20). Solomon's words of blessing nudge Israel toward greater faithfulness (1 Kings 8:65, 66).

B. For the LORD (v. 15)

15a. Then he said: “Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel.

Having brought the ark of the covenant into the temple (1 Kings 8:6; see lesson 6), Solomon reminds Israel of the greatness of God (compare David's words in 1 Chronicles 16:36). The Hebrew word translated *praise* is the same as the word previously translated “blessed” (see 1 Kings 8:14). The NIV frequently translates the word as “praise” when referring to human action toward God (Genesis 24:27; Exodus 18:10; 1 Samuel 25:32, 39; 2 Samuel 18:28; 22:47; 1 Kings 1:48; etc.). Such passages emphasize that the Lord is worthy of reverence and worship.

Solomon begins the praise by addressing God with the extended title *the Lord, the God of Israel* (see 1 Kings 8:17, 20). The component parts of this address suggest much about God. In English translations, the small capital letters in *LORD* indicate that the name Yahweh is being used. This is the name that God revealed to Moses, translated “I Am Who I Am” (Exodus 3:14). At least two important attributes are suggested in this name: that God is eternal (compare 1 Timothy 1:17), and that he is unchanging (compare James 1:17).

In contrast with this special name, the Hebrew word translated *God* is much more generic. Many cultures in the Ancient Near East use a form of the same word to refer to the greatest of their gods.

In Israel, of course, the term refers to the true God only and ascribes all honor and power and glory and might to him.

The words *Lord* and *God* are frequently used together in the Bible, notably in Genesis 2. In combination, *Lord God* suggests that the most powerful god—the only God—is also a God who chooses to be close to his people, to reveal himself to them so that they can know him.

The phrase *of Israel* further emphasizes God’s nearness—not just to his creation generally but to his chosen people specifically. The Lord God has chosen to create a covenant with Israel. Before revealing his name to Moses, the Lord indicated himself to be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 3:6). God connects his name to his people. Jesus will use this very name later to show that God is the God of the living, not the dead (Mark 12:24–27). The Lord God is the powerful, transcendent deity who is near to the Israelites and has made covenant with them.

15b. “who with his own hand has fulfilled what he promised with his own mouth to my father David. For he said,”

That Yahweh had spoken the promises to *David* with *his own mouth* points both to God’s intimate involvement in the promise and to its reliability (compare Psalm 105:8; Hebrews 6:13–20). Working out those blessings *with his own hand* paints an image of sovereign power (Deuteronomy 3:24; 2 Chronicles 30:12; Ezekiel 20:33; etc.). What the Lord had promised, he has now performed.

II. Promises **(1 KINGS 8:16–21)**

A. For David (vv. 16–18)

16a. “ ‘Since the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt,

Solomon joins Moses, Joshua, and Samuel as leaders of a given generation of Israelites who review significant events of their nation’s past (Deuteronomy 1–4; Joshua 24; 1 Samuel 12:6–15). We see in the Bible that remembering correctly is often the first step to acting rightly (Numbers 15:39; Deuteronomy 5:15; 1 Corinthians 11:23–34). Even God is said to remember his promises before taking action (Genesis 8:1; 9:15, 16; Exodus 2:24). Rehearsing national memories of what God has done helps orient a new generation toward God in preparation for a new era of his dealing with the nation (Exodus 13:3–16).

God’s covenant with *Israel* and his actions in rescuing that people from *Egypt* had formed the basis for God’s covenant with David (Exodus 19–24; 2 Samuel 7). The temple, obviously blessed by God with the presence of his glory (1 Kings 8:10, 11), now stands as a reminder of his continuing presence. It also serves as a portent of his future involvement in the nation (1 Kings 8:27–30; 2 Chronicles 6:10, 11). Should future generations dismiss God’s presence among them, judgment will follow (Jeremiah 7:4–15; Ezekiel 10:18, 19). They will, and it does.

16b. “ ‘I have not chosen a city in any tribe of Israel to have a temple built

Before *Israel* entered the promised land, Moses told the Israelites that the Lord would choose a place for their worship (Deuteronomy 12:4–7). For over four centuries, the portable tabernacle served as that sanctuary (Joshua 4:18, 19; 8:30–35; 1 Samuel 4:4; 1 Chronicles 17:5, 6).

During that time, Israel was meant to conquer the land (Joshua 1:3–6; Judges 1:19–21, 27–36). Israel’s hold on the land, however, began to solidify once David came to the throne. David’s victories over the Ammonites, Edomites, Philistines, Moabites, and Syrians (2 Samuel 5:17–25;

8) resulted in Israel's finally possessing the land the Lord had promised through Abraham and Moses (Genesis 15:18; Exodus 23:31; Deuteronomy 11:24). David's conquest of Jerusalem became the focal point of Israel's victories (2 Samuel 5:6–12).

16c. “ ‘so that my Name might be there,

The *Name* of the Lord is invoked repeatedly in the dedication of the temple (1 Kings 8:16–20, 29, 33, 35, 41–44, 48). God's glory and his name are frequently invoked in similar ways. Both are used to speak of God's awe-inspiring, transcendent nature.

When Moses desired to see the Lord's glory, God allowed him instead to hear a proclamation of God's name and to see his goodness (Exodus 33:18, 19). The Lord later proclaimed his name again to Moses, telling what his interactions with Israel have revealed about God's character (34:6, 7). The glory of the Lord subsequently made Moses' face shine (34:29–35).

While God's glory suggests that he is unapproachable (compare 1 Timothy 6:16), his name speaks of Israel's ability to know and experience his goodness and mercy. Solomon goes on to speak of Israel praising the Lord's name (1 Kings 8:33–36). Similarly, the psalmists frequently write of calling on or trusting in God's name (Psalms 9:10; 80:18; 99:6; 105:1; 116:13, 17).

Attaching one's name to something like a building or someone such as a spouse or family lineage conveys association. The Lord does not belong to the temple, but he does allow the temple to be associated with his name. He does not dwell in the temple in the sense that it contains him. The Lord remains transcendent, free, and sovereign even though the temple is a place where worshippers can connect with God.

16d. “ ‘but I have chosen David to rule my people Israel.’

Solomon's words suggest that the events in which the community is participating are part of the next major stage in the Lord's ongoing relationship with Israel. Instead of choosing a city in which to place his name, the Lord had chosen *David*. God promised that David would have an everlasting dynasty and that a son would build a temple for the Lord (2 Samuel 7:11–16).

Now the city David conquered has become the place the Lord allows to be the home of the temple that reflects his name (2 Chronicles 6:6). The temple becomes the authorized location for Israelites to worship (Deuteronomy 12:5).

17. “My father David had it in his heart to build a temple for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

The events Solomon recalls here and in subsequent verses are narrated in more detail in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17 (see commentary on 1 Kings 8:18, 19, below). Having conquered Jerusalem, *David* found an ally in Hiram, king of Tyre. Hiram aided in David's building projects by sending cedars from Lebanon as well as skilled workers to Jerusalem. These builders helped David construct a palace (2 Samuel 5:11). After its completion, David became concerned that he was living in a cedar palace while Israel worshipped the Lord in a tent (1 Samuel 7:1, 2). He then committed himself to build *a temple* for the Lord (1 Chronicles 22:7; Acts 7:46).

One inherently connects a person's name to that person's reputation. Therefore, David's desire to build a temple for God's *Name* expresses his desire to exalt *the Lord, the God of Israel* above the gods of the nations. This requires building the Lord an impressive house of worship that speaks of his glory and honor (Psalms 26:8; 132:5). Solomon will later connect the temple to the reputation of the Lord among the nations (1 Kings 8:41–43).

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.

Solomon's assertion here does not appear to be quoted from any recorded material of anything the Lord said to Nathan or David (see 2 Samuel 7:5–16; 1 Chronicles 17:3–14). Instead, Solomon's words make explicit that God had been pleased with David's intent but not his timing.

B. By the Lord (v. 19)

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.’

This verse highlights an important contrast: after God builds David's house, David's son will *build the temple* for God. Despite David's good intention, God did not desire that man to be the one who would build the temple (2 Samuel 7:5; compare 1 Kings 5:1–4). God's pleasure with David's impulse to build the Lord's temple can be seen in the fact that God allows his son Solomon to build it (2 Samuel 7:12, 13; 1 Kings 6).

Though David and Solomon may not have realized it at the time, the Lord's promise to David will bring about fulfillments of promises made to the patriarchs as well. The Lord told Abraham that all people groups would be blessed through that man's descendants (Genesis 12:3; 22:15–18). This promise is kept with God's honoring Jacob's blessing of Judah (49:8–12) when Jesus Christ is born of the line of David in the tribe of Judah (Luke 1:46–55, 68–75; 3:23, 33, 34).

C. In Solomon (vv. 20, 21)

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.

Kings in the Ancient Near East often build or refurbish a temple to their patron god in order to establish the legitimacy of their reign. Politically, it makes sense to have a designated place of worship for an entire nation. This can create a more cohesive culture and nurture greater unity than if each village worships at its own altars and temples. Solomon affirms that he has not built the temple in order to establish himself—God has *already* done that (1 Chronicles 28:6, 7). God's placing of Solomon *on the throne* fulfills the Lord's *promise to David* (2 Samuel 7:12).

Peoples of the Ancient Near East consider their temples to be the houses or palaces of the deity. In fact, the Hebrew noun often translated *temple* can also refer to a palace (example: 1 Kings 21:1). Which use is intended must be determined by context. Because the Lord is both God and king, speaking of the temple can sound to Solomon's audience like speaking of God's palace. This reminds the audience of God's royal status as Israel's true king, residing in his palace in Jerusalem.

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.”

The ark represents God's presence, throne, and reign (1 Samuel 4:4; 1 Chronicles 28:2; Psalms 99:1, 5; 132:7, 8; see lesson 6). The ark also testifies to *the covenant* relationship between the Lord and Israel (Numbers 10:33–36). Without the presence of the Lord that the ark represents, the temple is merely a majestic building. Without covenant faithfulness, neither the ark nor the temple mean anything (compare Jeremiah 7:1–15).

The ark contains the stone tablets of the covenant that the Lord had made in the desert with Israel. Solomon's reference to the ark thus underlines the tie between Israel's exodus experience

and the Lord's covenant with David, emphasized earlier. God was utterly faithful to Israel's *ancestors* who made the journey through the wilderness.

In some respects, the temple is analogous to the nation of Israel. The Lord will dwell in the temple just as he dwells within Israel. Just as the ark of the covenant is in the heart of the temple, so also the covenant is to be within the Israelites' hearts and actions. In a similar way, we speak today of believers as being the temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). We must therefore be faithful to our covenant with the Lord (6:20).

Conclusion

A. God Is Faithful

Solomon's declarations highlight the power of God's promises. What God had promised to David, God fulfilled through Solomon. Just as the Lord God of Israel had kept his promises to the patriarchs, to Moses, and to Israel in general, so also he kept his promises to David. God's covenant to establish an everlasting dynasty for David finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus, the son of David (Matthew 1:1).

In response to God's promises, we are to be a covenant-keeping people. How we use our "temples" reflects our commitment to the Lord. Will others see God fulfilling his promises in us?

B. Prayer

Our Father, we thank you that you are the God of promises made and kept. We thank you for your presence with us through your Spirit. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

C. Thought to Remember

If God has promised it, he will do it!¹
