

JUNE 11

1 Kings 8

This is one of the great prayers in the Bible. It has faith, emotion and truth and even the idea that for a time, Solomon grasped some aspects of the redemptive purpose of God.

This prayer and the dedication of the temple highlight a point in Israel's history that had never been reached before, and hasn't happened since. They were at peace. You can see Solomon's reign as a partial fulfillment of the promise to Abraham.

Look for all sorts of recurring words and themes. There is a very clear structure in Solomon's prayer that is given from the Spirit of God. Take time to observe the progression. The progression of this prayer will be true of Israel's history. As you read these progressions or situations, think of what you know of Israel's history where something like this happened. God was preparing the nation. On the positive side of things, look for words like *hear, forgive, pray, plea, turn, acknowledge*. Look for references to the nations. On the cautionary side of things, notice Solomon's use of *I*.

Vs. 1-11 The older southern side of Jerusalem was called *the city of David*. The ark and the tabernacle had been located there, but everything was moved to the north side of the city where the temple was.

There is a map in the [Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT](#) on p. 506 that might help here. If you can find it online, it is called "Jerusalem in the Time of the Kings."

It is interesting that immediately after the ark was placed and the priests left, *the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord*. This is exactly where Isaiah will see the glory of the Lord in those famous verses of Isaiah 6.

Vs. 12-26 The desire David had, years ago, which led to the covenant with David, was now fulfilled probably more than 30 years later. As we'll see in Chronicles, the temple was David's passion, and it had become Solomon's passion. Solomon asked for God's blessing by recounting both the promise to David and the promises to the fathers. I notice the use of "I" by Solomon. I might be reading something into that, because I know what is coming in Solomon's history.

Vs. 27-30 This sort of reminds me of Moses pleading with God to allow His presence to dwell in the midst of His people. What is interesting is that God was willing to bless and heed this request. Even when the temple was destroyed (ironically, something Solomon helped initiate) God blessed the prayers of men like Daniel who obeyed God and prayed toward the temple ruins. The great significance of what Solomon accomplished in building the temple and in this prayer was that God chose Zion as His city and His resting place. God's acceptance of this worship and the promise He makes to this city and this mount will resonate throughout all time. When the new heavens and the new earth are established after the Millennium, we don't know if there will be a new Milwaukee, but we know there will be an eternal new Jerusalem.

Vs. 31-53 This is the catalog of events that Solomon prayed God would forgive when the people prayed toward the temple. This is a good exercise for you, and the paragraph breaks will help you see the different situations and themes. One thing to see here is that there is a definite prophetic element. Solomon is predicting the Babylonian exile and the restoration of the people to the land and to Jerusalem.

Vs. 54-61 Verses 56-58 are like the program of God for Israel that will unfold over thousands of years and be completed in the Millennium. The Millennial Kingdom of Christ is where Israel will find its rest, where God will prove that He did not leave or forsake them and where the inclination of their hearts will be to worship the Messiah.

V. 60 This seems to give the idea that Solomon did have a sense for God's purpose in Israel. It is interesting to me, that in all of what he says, Solomon speaks of the promises to Moses as having

been fulfilled in David and in himself. He never mentions Abraham. If history has depth, Solomon doesn't go deep enough to really understand, that what is happening is really a partial fulfillment of God's plan of redemption as spoken to Abraham. God revealed His truth progressively, a little at a time, and Solomon might have been one of those kings who desired to look deeper and see the truths that you and I know and often take for granted.

V. 61 At this time Solomon and all the people were as wholly devoted to the Lord as they would ever be.

Vs. 62-66 With these large numbers of sacrifices you wonder about the timeframe. Just think logistically, how long it would have taken to march these animals in, kill, prepare and burn them. Most likely this happened over two weeks as the Septuagint reading (note at the bottom of the page) suggests.

Also, if only the priests and Levites could eat of the sacrificial offerings, and all of Israel was at this 1-2 week feast, there were probably animals being prepared for meals all over the place, and the entire area must have been packed with people. Interestingly enough, this would have taken place around the Day of Atonement and the Feast of the Tabernacles. We are told in Nehemiah that they didn't celebrate the Feast of the Tabernacles, but the Day of Atonement was the key national event.

My only comment here for us is that each of us has experienced a day or an emotional high like this. They're nice, but they don't last. All of that emotion and devotion is real on that day, but our race lasts a lifetime, or as long as God gives us to follow Christ in the harvest on earth. Worshipping God in Spirit means that daily worship is spirit on spirit, not based on the flesh or what the flesh needs, craves or recognizes as worship. Each day as we follow Christ in the harvest we are to worship in spirit and in truth. That makes for a very stable and unswerving walk.

Acts 7:51-8:13

Vs. 51-53 You know, when you preach, as your mouth speaks, you notice sometimes that your brain can be thinking completely different thoughts. It's almost like thinking ahead of your mouth and weighing or deciding how to formulate something or even anticipating the result. I wonder if, as Stephen was saying v. 51, he was thinking, "Spirit, you know, if I say that, they'll probably kill me." I wonder if he heard the Spirit say back to him, "Yeah, I'm cool with that. How about you?"

We are about to head into some examples of Christians whose lives were used as martyrs to make a statement. What would we think if God's purpose for our lives was to show that someone was willing to die for Him? Again, it all comes back to our spiritual understanding of God, life and the world. A disciple lives for Christ in the harvest to bring glory to God. If death is how we glorify Him, great. We know that we end up in heaven, getting R&R, sitting on a lounge chair with something cool to drink, looking at the(fill in the blank), enjoying the presence and glory of God. Now, God uses the lives of His martyrs for many, many purposes, but they don't see that. They only know that hot, pulsing moment when they bear witness for Christ.

Vs. 54-60 You'd want to attribute this rabid reaction to Stephen to the work of Satan, but since Satan isn't mentioned, it must be that we humans can do this all by ourselves.

It is interesting that Stephen saw Jesus standing, as if to welcome him, and he kept on speaking.

Now, Saul is mentioned here. It is thought that Saul was a very young member of the Sanhedrin and was also a member of the synagogue where Stephen had been a member. They probably knew each other. Whatever the reason was for Saul's anger, he was about to go postal. The fact that they laid their garments at Saul's feet probably means that he took some organizational responsibility for what was happening. If in fact, he was a member of the Sanhedrin, then giving his approval meant he was representing the religious leadership of Israel.

Acts 8:1-13

Vs. 1-3 Saul (Paul) will mention this again, particularly that he took the women too. That he took women also, making families parentless, seems to show the violence and intensity of his hatred for Christians.

Vs. 4-8 I've heard some preachers say that this persecution was because the Christians didn't obey Acts 1:8 and were becoming cemented into Jerusalem. I can't see that. There was nothing negative. God brought the church to a full and complete "ripeness," and then sent them out. It doesn't mention that they went crying. Actually they went with joy, preaching.

V. 5 All directions from Jerusalem were "down." Actually Philip went north. Now, Philip was a Hellenistic Jewish Christian. A Hebraic Jewish Christian would never have preached to the Samaritans. Philip was another one of the seven and now he was being put into action by the Spirit.

Vs. 9-13 Simon recognized that the power Philip had was legitimate and from God the Spirit. Simon had performed acts using assistance from demons. What we are seeing in Simon is the beginning of seeking power in Christianity, without seeking the Lord of Christianity. We saw the seeking of position in the church with Ananias and Sapphira. This is another kind of sickness that has crept in. Satan is no fool. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

Now you won't hear this until tomorrow because this reading for today ends here, so I'll tell you now that this situation is not normal. Not normal how? The people had believed in Jesus and been baptized, but they had not received the Spirit. That is not normal. Today, the instant a person confesses Christ as Savior they are baptized, sealed and indwelt with the Spirit. In this situation in Acts, it would not be until Hebraic Jewish Christians came to see what had happened, so the Spirit could use their testimony to defuse their Jewish sense of nationalism and hate for the Samaritans, that the Spirit would be given. This "giving of the Holy Spirit" is not "normal" for today. What is being underscored is that many of the events in Acts were for the time of the beginning of the church.

Psalm 129

This song of pilgrims approaching Jerusalem for worship was probably written after the exile. Zion is the city that had been destroyed by the nations, and though they and their fathers had been swept into other lands, God had shown His faithfulness by bringing them back to Zion.

Vs. 1-4 Israel was a target from its inception. Satan sought to ruin it using the nations to corrupt the witness of God among the nations. They became the "everyman" for humanity to show how each of us would act in the presence of God. We would rebel and seek to kill God, just like they did to Jesus.

Vs. 5-8 Yet Zion stands as the place where Jesus will reign. God has set a place and a city. All who rail against Zion rail against God, and the day will come when God will bless Zion and He will stand in that city. Then those who refuse to bless Zion and its King will fail to bless the only God. And they'll be in trouble.

Proverbs 17:1

Amen. The mind that is set on the Spirit is life and peace. As Jesus said in John 4, the will of the Father becomes our food and our delight.